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NEWS WORTH SHARING.

Vatican to go before UN

Holy See will be forced to publicly defend treatment of children and handling of pedophile priests PAGES 18 & 19

FAT-BOTTOMED COPS: BY (DAIRY) QUEEN

IN RUSSIA THE ROTUND GET REJECTED; IN THE U.S., COPS ARE AS PAUNCHY AS THE REST, STUDY SHOWS PAGE 20

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A GOOD OMEN?

Simon Jones and his father Gareth get their photo taken with the Stanley Cup during a promotional appearance inside City Hall on Monday. The current Oilers made some significant changes to the lineup on Wednesday. See page 30 for more. RYAN TUMILTY/METRO

Staff were disciplined after explosive gaffe: Airport security

Free to go... Workers contacted RCMP very late in process: CATSA

The agency responsible for airport screening says its staff made a mistake when they confiscated an explosive device from a passenger's bag but let the young man get on a plane rather than calling police.

Mathieu Larocque, spokesman for the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority (CATSA), said staff in Edmonton should have contacted police right away, not four days later.

He said a review was conducted after the incident last fall and some screening employees were suspended.

"There were people disciplined and they were required to take extra training," Larocque said Wednesday. "The procedure is to call the police and it didn't happen or it happened very late in the process."

News of the foul-up only made headlines this week. Federal Transport Minister Lisa Raitt issued a statement earlier Wednesday calling the incident unacceptable.

"The safety of Canadians and the travelling public is our government's top priority," Raitt said. "This individual should not have been allowed to board his flight, and it is unacceptable that CATSA waited four days before seeking the RCMP's assistance."

She said she planned to call the president of the agency to discuss the matter further.

Skylar Murphy, 19, of Spruce Grove, Alta., pleaded guilty last month to possession of an explosive substance while at the Edmonton International Airport on Sept. 20.

He was sentenced to a year of probation and fined $100.

Court documents describe the material seized from his carry-on luggage as "black powder" and some reports say it was a 15-centimetre pipe bomb with a fuse wrapped around it.

CBC quoted sources as saying a screening officer tried to return the device to Murphy when it was found, but the teen didn't want it back.

The media outlets reported Murphy made the device while fooling around with friends and mistakenly left it in a bag he was taking on a trip to Mexico with his family.

RCMP spokeswoman Josee Valiquette said the security authority notified police on Sept. 24 about the seizure. Officers arrested Murphy on Sept. 27. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Baggage blunder

"It is unacceptable that CATSA waited four days before seeking the RCMP's assistance."

Federal Transport Minister Lisa Raitt

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Diesel fuel leak

No one injured in Edmonton train derailment: CN

CN said no one was injured on Wednesday after six train cars derailed and caused a diesel fuel leak at a city yard near Yellowhead Trail and 73 Street.

At approximately 10:20 a.m., a collision occurred at CN's Walk yard in Edmonton, said company spokesperson Emily Hamer.

"Preliminary indications are that three locomotives derailed, but upright, two dangerous goods tank cars derailed, but upright, and one empty flat car derailed, but upright," she explained.

There was also an engine diesel fuel leak from one of the locomotives, but the leak has been plugged, Hamer added.

Monique Nadeau, who lives across the street from the derailment, said she wasn't aware of the collision until her brother who lives in Fort McMurray called.

"I hear bings and bangs all the time," she said. "Today, the first inclination I had of anything happening were these beautiful firemen showing up."

While Nadeau has lived in the area for 12 years, she has never witnessed an accident of this magnitude.

"I always worried about something like this happening," she said. "There is so much traffic on these tracks, there was bound to be something happening."

LEAH GERMAIN/METRO

Investigation. Suspect sought after suspicious package found

Edmonton police are looking for a man who left a suspicious package at a west end Walmart Tuesday, which led to police evacuating the store and cordoning off the parking lot.

The man is described as 25 to 35 years old, caucasian, with a thin build and approximately six-foot-three, with brown hair with a short buzz cut. Anyone with information is asked to call Edmonton Police Service at 780-423-4567.

RYAN TUMILTY/METRO

Edmonton police are hoping someone who can identify this man comes forward. CONTRIBUTED

Negotiations. AUPE says latest Alberta contract offer isn't good enough

The head of Alberta's largest public-sector union says while the province has improved its latest contract offer, it's going to have to do a lot better.

"The latest proposal from the government was marginally better … but it doesn't even come close to meeting the needs that we're seeking for our members," said Guy Smith, president of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees.

Negotiators for both sides resumed talks this week, just two weeks before a legislated deal is to kick in. The Public Service Salary Restraint Act has been the focus of controversy and anger since it was introduced and passed by Premier Alison Redford's government last month. THE CANADIAN PRESS

On the web

For more local news go to metronews.ca

Record-high winds sideline LRT service

Busy time. City stretched to put shuttle buses in place during morning rush

City officials were put into a scramble Wednesday morning after record-high winds forced a partial shutdown of the LRT system.

John Wollenzin, the city's supervisor of LRT operations, said the high winds damaged crossing arms leaving some dangling on high-voltage wires, forcing the shutdown.

The city put shuttle buses in places when service was cut off, but there were reports of extremely long lines, Wollenzin said, adding staff worked as quickly as they could.

"It certainly is a challenge, especially when most of the fleet is out on the road during the morning rush," he said.

The system does not have a huge number of surplus buses, but Wollenzin said they do have contingency plans.

"They do have certain runs and routes that they will automatically go and reduce service on when we have disruptions on LRT," he explained. Wollenzin said they don't take the decision to suspend service lightly, but they always err on the side of safety. "We would rather inconvenience people than put anyone in danger."

Environment Canada Meteorologist Dan Kulak said the City Centre Airport recorded a wind speed of 120 kilometres per hour, which beat out the previous record top speed for January set in 1972.

RYAN TUMILTY/METRO

Crews work to remove a broken crossing arm from overhead wires along 111 Street Wednesday. The arm was among several that snapped in high winds forcing a closure of the LRT system. RYAN TUMILTY/METRO

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MacEwan squash courts closure 'devastating,' say club members

The squash courts in the Christenson Family Centre for Sport and Wellness at MacEwan University will be repurposed come April. STEPHANIE DUBOIS/METRO

Running out of room. University staff said the courts will be repurposed to meet growing fitness demand

STEPHANIE DUBOIS
stephanie.dubois@metronews.ca

MacEwan University will be closing their squash courts this April, something local squash players say is a big mistake for the sport.

MacEwan officials sent out an email to all staff earlier this week stating the squash courts will be shut down.

Cathryn Heslep, vice-president of student services, stated Wednesday the area will be repurposed into a spin and studio area, costing under $500,000.

"Our capacity in the fitness centre is an issue and certainly the number of the users in the fitness centre in particular has increased significantly and we're planning to consolidate," she said. "This really was the most cost-effective method we could take."

The four MacEwan squash courts — which are situated inside the school's Christenson Family Centre for Sport and Wellness — were home to a squash club of about 150 players who were part of the Edmonton Squash League.

Louis Wang, president of the Edmonton Squash League, says the loss of the courts will probably mean the second largest club in the league could lose its numbers.

"It's devastating to the league (because) MacEwan had four squash courts, but the number of players that play out of MacEwan out of the league is pretty significant," he said.

Patrick Roy, director to Squash Alberta and MacEwan club member, said the inevitable closure of the courts will be a huge loss for the squash community in Edmonton, which is trying to attract younger players.

"It's most unfortunate because squash as a sport, there aren't that many facilities specifically designed for that and Grant MacEwan has four courts built that way," he said. "I fully understand that with our last provincial budget, there is a lot of pressure on post-secondaries … it's just unfortunate that they're choosing to re-dedicate space that is certainly used by students and members."

League of their own

- Edmonton Squash League is made up of 600 players from around the city.
- MacEwan staff met with the different squash leagues who play out of the university Monday night to inform them of the court closure decision.

Police survey results used alongside policing efforts

Edmonton Police say the information collected during their biannual Citizen Satisfaction Survey could be used to enhance local policing in the future.

Information collected during the telephone survey conducted by a third party will be reported back on a division level this year, explained EPS staff.

In the city's last budget deliberations, some information collected from the 2011 survey was used during the EPS's presentation, said Andrew Lejeune, strategic analyst for the police department.

Phone survey

1,100

Edmontonians will be phoned during the three-week television survey

EPS staff say reoccurring themes often make themselves known in the survey, but it also helps police get an idea of what the general population thinks is important.

"In every iteration of the survey to-date, traffic concerns have been identified. I know that's something EPS is responsive to, in having traffic teams out in the neighbourhoods to monitor if there's excessive speeding or reckless driving. It's not directly related to the survey, but it does play a part in it," he said.

"It's a good way to systematically engage the citizens and systematically get feedback. This allows us to get good, valid, reliable results that we can report on a city level, not just a division level."

Survey results will be presented to the Edmonton Police Commission in late spring. RYAN TUMILTY/METRO

Edmonton Police used the information collected during the biannual survey during budget deliberations at the city. RYAN TUMILTY/METRO

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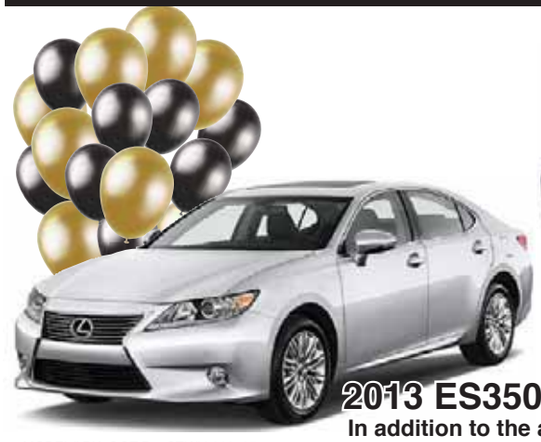

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University students may get a break. Fall reading week could come to pass

A long hoped for fall reading week at the University of Alberta could be a reality.

University of Alberta Student Union president Petros Kusmu said he's hopeful that the week-long break for students will be approved by the university.

"We are cautiously optimistic, I don't want to jinx anything," he said.

Kusmu said the arrangement needs the approval of the school's General Faculties Council, which will meet on the issue in February, and if it's approved there the school's provost could make it a reality.

Kusmu said students really believe the idea will help balance the two semesters, relieve stress and allow students to get caught up on work.

"I am hoping they will be receptive to the idea," he said. "Students have been waiting for this for more than four years now." RYAN TUMILTY/METRO

Hear her Roar

Katy Perry heading to Edmonton

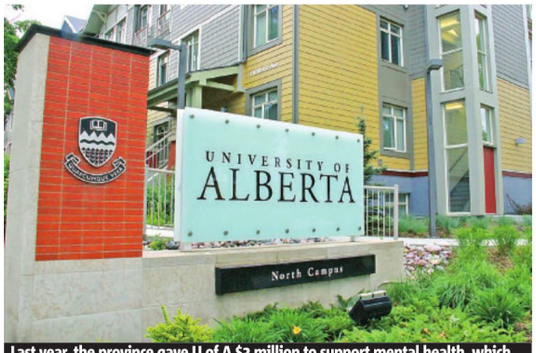
Katy Perry will be roaring into town this summer, as the singer announced her latest North American tour Wednesday.

Along with other Canadian stops, including Calgary and Vancouver, Perry will be stopping in Edmonton as part of her tour Prismatic.

Known for singles like I Kissed a Girl and Fireworks, Perry will be bringing Capital Cities, Kacey Musgraves and Canadian duo Tegan and Sara on tour with her throughout Canada and the U.S.

The Edmonton date is set for Aug. 31. METRO

Provincial funding had dramatic impact on U of A's mental-health support



Last year, the province gave U of A $3 million to support mental health, which has gone to mental-health services and on campus projects to support students.
METRO FILE

Quoted

"Students in crisis are more at risk academically and students who are doing well are mentally healthy."

Robin Everall, Associate Dean of Student Services

Wellness fund. School puts money toward projects on campus

LEAH GERMAIN
edmonton@metronews.ca

More than a year after the provincial government announced $3 million in funding for the University of Alberta's mental-health support clinic, the school's Associate Dean of Students said the funding has had a dramatic impact.

"That money has allowed us to put into place some of the strategies that we see as best practice," said Robin Everall Monday.

While the university has allocated some of those funds to mental-health services, it has also been used to enhance the overall profile of health and wellness.

"Students in crisis are more at risk academically and students who are doing well are mentally healthy," Everall said.

Announced in January last year, the funding sought to address long wait times for clinical mental-health services, while working to find alternative ways to reach students on campus, like the community social work team.

The University of Alberta's student union vice-president Michael Lau said some of the funding has gone to support a new campus initiative.

"The part that is most exciting to the larger campus community is the program they have started with the Wellness Project," Lau said.

The Wellness Project offers grant funding with continuous applications to students to develop ideas to support wellness, Lau added.

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Hempology 101. Club riles UBC student admin with weed-vapourizer party

Ain't no party like a UBC vapour party — because that's the kind of party that can get you expelled.

Student administrators at the University of British Columbia are investigating the campus's Hempology 101 club for holding an indoor 4:20 meeting last week enticing people to "stay dry and get high" in the Student Union Building (SUB).

Club treasurer Corbin Manson did not respond to repeated interview requests from Metro, but after he spoke to the UBC student newspaper, the club posted a statement on its website calling the party "wildly successful."

"I want to set the record straight: There is no conclusive evidence that Hempology 101 has broken any laws," wrote one of the executives (it is unclear which one).

A staffer reaches for a vapourizer Wednesday at B.C. Marijuana Party headquarters in Vancouver. KATE WEBB/METRO

The student paper, The Ubyssey, reported that 25 people attended the meeting and a towel was placed under the door to keep the vapour in. KATE WEBB/METRO IN VANCOUVER

Ratapooey. Urban rodents carry diarrhea-causing bacteria: Study

Just when you thought the reputation of urban rats couldn't sink any lower, new research has proven the critters carry bacteria that causes diarrhea in humans.

B.C. scientists found Clostridium difficile in the poop of 13 per cent of Rattus rattus and Rattus norvegicus in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, according to research published in the Journal of Applied and Environmental Microbiology in December.

C. difficile causes diarrhea and intestinal disease in people, especially children and pets. While the study doesn't show whether rats can actually transmit the bacteria to people or other animals, it's the first to investigate whether the pests carry more than just the plague.

The research is part of the Vancouver Rat Project, the first study in Canada to research urban rat populations to see if they pose a health risk.

It involves samples from more than 700 wild rats from one of Canada's poorest neighbourhoods, a veritable hotbed of the creatures due to its old buildings and proximity to the port.

EMILY JACKSON/METRO IN VANCOUVER

Justices waver on protest-free zone rules at abortion clinics

Alan Hoyle, of Lincolnton, N.C., stands outside the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C., on Wednesday. The court heard arguments on the regulation of protests at abortion clinics and seemed likely Wednesday to strike down a Massachusetts law setting a 10-metre protest-free zone outside clinics. Liberal and conservative justices alike expressed misgivings about the law during arguments at the high court. They questioned the size of the zone and whether the state could find less restrictive ways of ensuring patient access and safety. EVAN VUCCI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Google showing illegal web ads

Upgrades coming. Canada's Privacy commissioner is also pushing the company to make it easier for consumers to be heard

Google has been caught afoul of the law by displaying web ads linked to a person's health history, according to Canada's interim privacy commissioner Chantal Bernier.

An investigation by Bernier's office backed up a man's complaints that he was seeing so-called behavioural advertisements based on his web browsing history. After searching for information about devices to treat sleep apnea, he began to see ads for those devices as he browsed the web.

While behavioural advertising is not illegal, Canada's privacy law does not allow consumers to be targeted based on "sensitive personal information," including their health.

Google's privacy policy outlaws displaying advertisements based on race, religion, sexual orientation or health. But the Mountain View, Calif.-based company acknowledged that some advertisers using its ad-serving platform were not following the policy.

Google has pledged to upgrade the system that reviews ads for compliance, increase the monitoring of ads and provide more information to advertisers and staff about the rules.

"The monitoring system was not tight enough, not robust enough to ensure compliance, it wasn't extensive enough to deal with the volume of ads," said Bernier in an interview.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Mexican teen died from drinking liquid meth

Not apple juice.
Autopsy report released Wednesday confirmed student's cause of death

A Mexican high school student died from drinking highly concentrated liquid methamphetamine at a San Diego border crossing in an attempt to persuade inspectors that it was only apple juice, according to an autopsy report released Wednesday.

Cruz Marcelino Velazquez, 16, volunteered to take "a big sip" at the San Ysidro port of entry Nov. 18, the report said. He was then handcuffed and taken to a security office, where he began screaming in pain, said something about "the chemicals," and shouted, "My heart! My heart!" in Spanish, it added.

The San Diego County Medical Examiner's report gives no indication that inspectors asked him to drink the liquid and doesn't say if they had an opportunity to stop him when he volunteered.

Velazquez died hours later at a hospital from acute methamphetamine intoxication.

San Ysidro, the nation's busiest border crossing, has emerged as a major corridor for smuggling methamphetamine in the past five years as Mexico's Sinaloa cartel has increased its presence in the area. To avoid detection, crystal methamphetamine is dissolved in water and disguised in juice bottles, windshield wiper fluid containers and gas tanks. It is later converted back to crystals.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

From trash to treasure

"Miracle" is seen in the arms of Islip Councilman Anthony Senft, Jr., on Wednesday in Islip, New York. Miracle, who was rescued from a black plastic bag that was tossed in a dumpster on Christmas Eve 2013, will be offered up for adoption at the Islip Animal Shelter beginning Jan. 16. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, England

Urn of Sigmund Freud damaged in attempted robbery

British police are hunting burglars who tried to steal the ashes of psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud from a London crematorium.

The Metropolitan Police force said Wednesday that a 2,300-year-old Greek urn containing the remains of Freud and his wife, Martha, was severely damaged in a break-in at Golders Green Crematorium on Dec. 31 or Jan. 1.

The father of psychoanalysis moved to Britain from Nazi-controlled Austria in 1938. He died in London in September 1939, aged 83. His remains, and those of his wife, who died in 1951, had sat in an urn atop a plinth inside the 112-year-old crematorium. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Congo

Runway landing impairs drone

An unarmed UN drone was damaged on Wednesday after sliding off the runway into the grass while trying to land in the city of Goma, the U.N. special representative for Congo said.

The drone is part of a new program to monitor armed groups in the conflict-ridden region of eastern Congo.

The incident occurred as the drone was returning from a mission, and no casualties were reported, said Lt. Col. Felix Prosper Basse, a military spokesman for the country's peacekeeping mission.

Last March the U.N. Security Council authorized the use of unarmed drones on a trial basis for intelligence gathering in eastern Congo. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Edmonton Space & Science Foundation Board	1
Edmonton Public Library Board	1
Greater Edmonton Foundation (Seniors Housing)	3
Naming Committee	1
Snow Valley Ski Club Board	1
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THE CITY OF Edmonton

DNA test planned in body mix-up investigation

'It's frustrating.' Family awaiting results to determine if U.S. woman was cremated in Canada

The daughter of a U.S. woman whose casket contained the wrong body says DNA tests will be performed to determine if her mother was accidentally cremated in Canada.

Lisa Kondvar and her family discovered someone else's body in Margaret Porkka's casket last month at a New Jersey funeral home.

Porkka, 82, had died unexpectedly during a trip to St. Maarten over Thanksgiving and the family suspects her body was confused with that of a Canadian woman who died on the island around the same time.

Scott Aldridge, a detective in Barrie, Ont., says that the woman in Porkka's casket has been identified as 82-year-old Kathleen Togwell of Barrie and her body is being returned to Canada.

A Foreign Affairs spokeswoman has said that the department has been in touch both with officials in St. Maarten and relatives of the Canadian.

Kondvar said bodily fluids were recovered from a casket in Canada that might have contained Porkka's body.

The family has sent her hairbrush and toothbrush for DNA testing and results are not expected until the end of the month.

"They're just starting on it now," she said. "It's frustrating."

The family wants to take possession of the ashes if they are determined to be those of Porkka. Kondvar said her father, Pete, is "just broken" after not being able to say goodbye to his wife.

St. Maarten Prime Minister Sarah Wescot-Williams said last week that the government there has formed a committee to investigate the case at the request of U.S. officials.

Emerald Funeral Home director Orlando Vanterpool said, to his knowledge, he sent the correct remains but that he will provide a refund if it's determined a mistake was made.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS

An Indian policeman stands outside the police station, which is investigating the gang-rape of a Danish tourist in New Delhi, India, Wednesday. TSERING TOPGYAL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Police say Danish tourist gang-raped in New Delhi

A 51-year-old Danish tourist was gang-raped near a popular shopping area in New Delhi after she approached a group of men for directions, police said Wednesday.

Police spokesman Rajan Bhagat said two people were arrested after a daylong search for the suspects.

The woman also was robbed and beaten in the attack, which happened Tuesday near Connaught Place, Bhagat said. The attack is the latest crime to focus attention on the scourge of sexual violence in India.

The woman asked the men for directions to her hotel, Bhagat said. They lured her to a secluded area where they raped her at knifepoint, according to the Press Trust of India.

The woman managed to reach her hotel Tuesday evening and the owner called police.

"When she came, it was miserable," said Amit Bahl, owner of the Amax hotel in the Paharganj area. The woman was crying and "not in good shape," he said.

"I am really ashamed that this happened," said Bahl, who sounded shaken.

The woman, whose name was not released, was on her way back to Denmark, said Ole Egberg Mikkelsen, head of the Danish Foreign Ministry's consular department in Copenhagen, which handles cases involving Danes abroad. Egberg Mikkelsen said the woman had received assistance from Indian and Danish authorities, and that her next of kin had been contacted.

An Indian police official said the woman boarded a flight home Wednesday morning.

The problem of sexual violence in India has gained widespread attention since the horrific gang rape and murder of a 23-year-old woman on a moving bus in December 2012. Public fury over the case has led to more stringent laws that doubled prison terms for rape to 20 years and criminalized voyeurism and stalking.

But for many women, particularly the poor, daily indignities and abuse continue unabated and the new laws have not made the streets any safer.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Myanmar. Military still using rape as a weapon of war, say rights activists

A soldier in full uniform saw the seven-year-old in her front yard soon after her parents left to tend to their rice paddies in Myanmar's restive state of Shan. She said he ordered her inside the family's bamboo hut.

"He hit me and told me to take off my clothes," the girl told the tightly packed courtroom in a whisper, as her alleged assailant, Maung Win Htwe, looked on, stone-faced.

"Then … he raped me."

Rights activists in Myanmar, also known as Burma, say the army continues to use rape as a weapon of war nearly three years after President Thein Sein's nominally civilian government ended a half-century of brutal military rule. On Tuesday, the Women's League of Burma released a report documenting more than 100 rapes, almost all in townships plagued by stubborn ethnic insurgencies. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Volatile Dagestan region

Gunfight leaves 5 dead in Russia

A shootout between security forces and militants in the volatile Russian region of Dagestan killed five people, authorities said.

The gunbattle broke out after militants barricaded themselves inside a home in the village of Karlanyurt, Dagestan Investigative Committee spokesman Rasul Temirbekov said.

The fatalities included three security force members and two militants.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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For the Queen. Chocolate castle, enamelled beetles among unusual gifts

Queen Elizabeth II received dozens of traditional gifts last year — but she also got some unusual items.

The High Commissioner for Bangladesh gave the Queen four enamelled Scarab beetles, and Sri Lanka's president chose a portrait of the monarch burned onto a tree trunk. The maker of Mars Bars gave her a chocolate version of Windsor Castle.

Some of the more lavish items included a family photograph in a gold frame set on a jeweled ostrich egg and a five-strand pearl necklace, given by the president of the United Arab Emirates.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

With love, from Canada

- The Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan gave Queen Elizabeth a diamond and tourmaline brooch last year.
- A Canadian artist presented Princess Anne an art print of the Queen's daughter riding a moose.

New York

Kittens break into max security jail

A litter of four kittens has found a cosy home in the least cosy of places — the basement of the maximum-security Great Meadow prison in Fort Ann in upstate New York.

The family of feral felines has been cared for by inmates and prison staff. Head electrician Bruce Porter arrives at work early so he can tend to the cats, which live in a large cage built by an inmate.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sharing food makes the heart grow fonder, at least in chimps

Two chimpanzees share a piece of watermelon at Taronga Zoo in Sydney, Australia. RICK STEVENS-TARONGA ZOO/GETTY IMAGES FILE

Love hormone. Study found both the giver and receiver of food had higher levels of oxytocin, indicating sharing makes both parties feel good

A study published Wednesday appears to confirm that friendships are forged at mealtimes, at least for our closest living relatives.

Scientists from Germany, Switzerland, Britain and the United States have found that chimpanzees who share their food have higher levels of oxytocin, known as the love hormone, than those who don't.

Oxytocin has previously been linked to bonding between mothers and their breastfeeding babies, both in primates and humans.

Roman Wittig of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany, said chimpanzees had more than twice the level of oxytocin after sharing food than after mutual grooming — another important bonding behaviour in primates.

Julia Lehmann, an evolutionary anthropologist, said the results appear to support the idea that food sharing can extend social benefits normally found in animals who are related to each other to those dining partners who aren't related. In other words, the way to a chimp's heart is through its stomach.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"We think food sharing can help spark new friendships, whereas grooming is more for confirmation of existing relationships."

Roman Wittig, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Germany

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Widower's napkin note becomes viral love letter

This one's on me.
Grieving man says young couple reminded him of happy days with his late wife, so he grabbed the cheque

Lee Ballantyne, former editor of the Belleville Intelligencer and current columnist for the Barrie Advance, went out to dinner on Jan. 7, barely a week after his wife Carol's death. The melancholy meal became a more pleasant experience for Ballantyne as he watched a young couple enjoying dinner together across the room from where he sat.

In what he described as a spontaneous gesture, Ballantyne seized a napkin and dashed off a quick note to the unknown pair: "You don't know me but my beautiful wife of 43 years died last week. Tonight I dined alone for the first time. You remind me of us many years ago. Please allow me to buy your dinner. Enjoy! It will put a smile on Carol's face and make me happy . . . for now. Happy New Year! Lee B. Pay it forward."

A waiter at the restaurant photographed the note and posted it online. Within hours, Ballantyne's words and generosity were making an impact around the world.

Ballantyne said his note was reposted to various social networks and had garnered hundreds of thousands of views by the end of the week. Traditional media soon followed suit, with the U.K.'s Daily Mail writing a story and posting pictures of the Ballantynes and their children.

What the note did not capture, Lee's son Jason Ballantyne said, was the long-standing bond between his parents.

Lee and Carol Ballantyne met when they were still teenagers in the northern Ontario mining town of Kirkland Lake.

The relationship, which Jason Ballantyne said went through typical ups and downs, grew closer in the past five years as Carol struggled with lupus, cancer and other medical conditions.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

'Miracle on the Hudson' reunion

Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger III, a retired airline captain famous for landing a plane on the Hudson River, hugs a passenger from the flight at a press conference celebrating the five year anniversary on Jan. 15 in New York City. In 2009, Sullenberger's plane hit a goose shortly after take off, forcing him to land in the Hudson River; no one was killed. ANDREW BURTON/GETTY IMAGES

Ohio

Woman offers unusual reward for lost dog

An Ohio woman made fliers offering a case of beer and a pack of cigarettes as a reward for finding her lost dog — and it worked.

Twenty-three-year-old Abigail Miller of Dayton offered the reward after her two dogs escaped through an open gate on Jan. 2.

The Dayton Daily News reports that Miller came up with the reward because she could afford it and figured it would attract attention.

She was right. The man who called and told Miller where to find one of her dogs turned down the reward, but she says she's going to offer him some food from the sandwich shop where she works.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pizza Hut

New crust boasts intentional flaws

Pizza Hut is set to announce a revamped hand-tossed pie this week that it says has a lighter, airier crust brushed with a garlic butter seasoning. Although Pizza Hut isn't touting it as prominently, there's another feature to the new recipes worth noting: Deliberate imperfections.

Carrie Walsh, Pizza Hut's chief marketing officer, says employees were trained to have "more freedom" when stretching out the new hand-tossed pies.

The idea is to give them a more handmade look, in line with the growing push by companies to ensure their food doesn't seem as though it rolled off factory conveyor belts.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sea piracy. Attacks fall to a six-year low after major progress in Somalia

World sea piracy fell for a third straight year in 2013, as Somali pirates were curbed by international naval patrols and improved ship vigilance, an international maritime watchdog said Wednesday.

The International Maritime Bureau said global pirate attacks fell to a six-year low of 264, down from 297 in 2012 and 439 in 2011. Pirate attacks have declined since hitting a peak in 2010 with 445 attacks.

A total of 12 vessels were hijacked, with more than 300 crew members taken hostage and one killed during 2013, according to data compiled by the London-based bureau's piracy reporting centre in Malaysia.

"The single biggest reason for the drop in worldwide piracy is the decrease in Somali piracy off the coast of East Africa," said IMB director Capt. Pottengal Mukundan.

Somali pirates have been deterred by international navies, stronger vessels, the use of private armed security teams and the stabilizing influence of Somalia's central government, the bureau said.

Only 15 attacks were reported off Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden, the lowest since 2006. It was also down sharply from 75 cases in 2012 and 237 in 2011.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Problem areas

The IMB said West African piracy took a turn for the worse and accounted for 19 per cent of global attacks last year.

- Nigerian pirates accounted for 31 of the region's 51 attacks, more than in any year since 2008, it said.
- Across the Indonesian archipelago, the IMB said piracy has surged but were mainly "low-level opportunistic thefts." A total of 106 cases were reported, up from 81 in 2012, it said.

Bosnia opens library to house ancient manuscripts

A security worker passes by old books during the opening ceremony of Gazi Husrev-bey library in Sarajevo, Bosnia, Wednesday. AMEL EMRIC/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Permanent home. Qatar funds library for ancient books and manuscripts saved by residents during the Bosnian war

On Wednesday, thanks to a $9 million donation from Qatar, Bosnia's president and a Qatar minister opened a new library in the heart of the Ottoman-era Old Town section of Sarajevo to house the biggest collection of oriental books and manuscripts in Southeast Europe. The oldest is a handwritten Islamic encyclopedia that was written in Arabic in 1105.

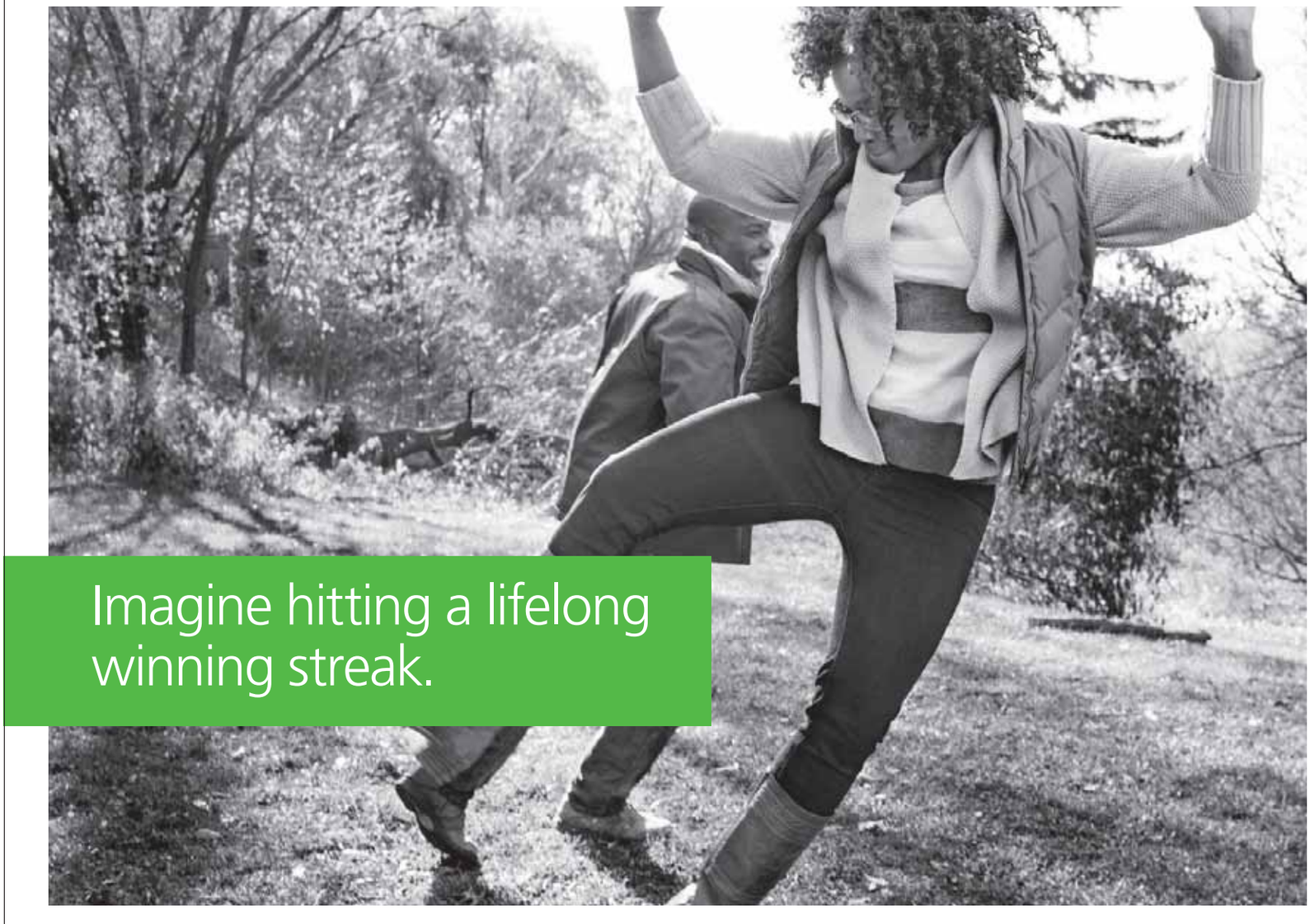
The Gazi Husrev-bey Library is located on the site of a famous mosque and Islamic school of the same name that was opened in 1531. The books and manuscripts were kept there from 1537-1863, then moved to another building.

During Bosnia's 1992-95 war, Serb artillery pounded the city for years, often targeting only cultural sites.

About three million books went up in flames, along with hundreds of original documents from the Ottoman Empire and the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The texts from the smaller Gazi Husrev-bey's Library were saved in time by residents who moved the manuscripts from basement to basement.

Qatar's Islamic affairs minister, Ghaith bin Mubarak Al Kuwari, called the library a "temple of knowledge and culture" that will be open to all people, regardless of their nationality and religion.

He explained that Qatar regards the Balkans as a strategically important region because of the different religions that have lived together here for centuries. Qatar also supports the efforts of the Balkan Muslims to serve Islam in a moderate way. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



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Top court studies Marc Nadon's appointment

Analyzing the details. Legal arguments hinge on everything from history to grammar

Everything from the parsing of verb tenses to the intentions of the framers of the failed Meech Lake constitutional accord was tossed into the hopper Wednesday as lawyers argued over the composition of the Supreme Court of Canada.

The legal battle over Prime Minister Stephen Harper's sixth appointment to the top court only occasionally touched upon the credentials of Justice Marc Nadon, the man at the centre of the unprecedented dispute.

Speaking out

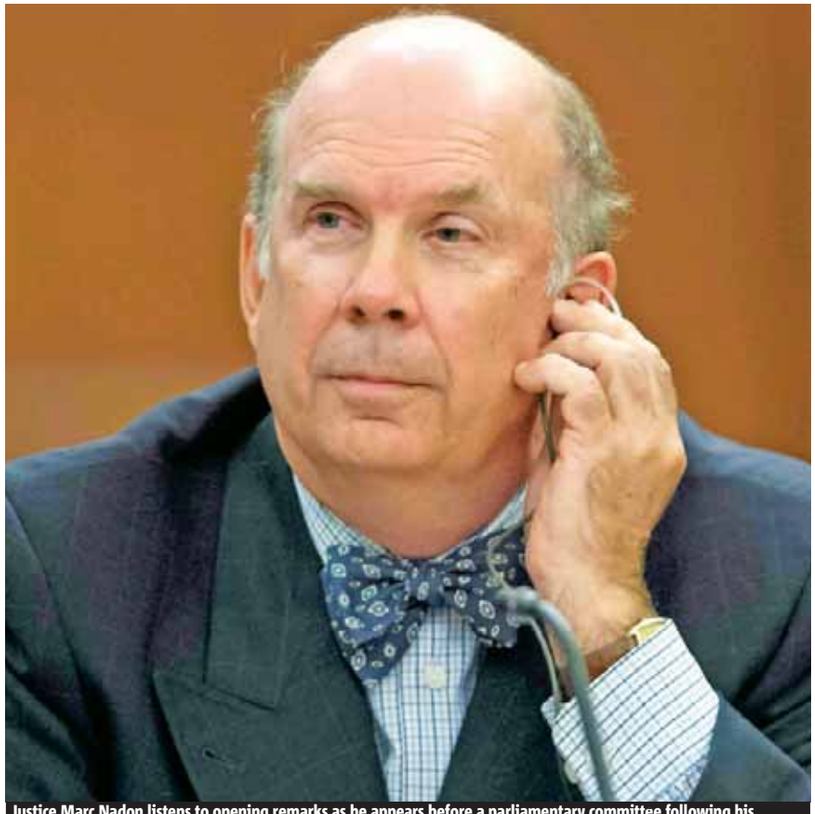
- While the court was hearing five hours of dry legal argument, Justice Minister Peter MacKay was making his own case before the news cameras at an event in west-end Ottawa.
- He said it would be unfair to exclude Federal Court judges from Quebec, while judges from other provinces don't face similar restrictions.

Nadon, 64 and semi-retired from the Federal Court of Appeal before he was plucked from obscurity last September, faces a constitutional challenge because he may not meet the criteria to sit as one of the three Quebec-based judges that are required on the nine-member bench.

In its haste to legitimize the appointment last fall, the government altered the Supreme Court Act in an omnibus budget bill to "clarify" the criteria for Quebec appointees.

The remaining Supreme Court justices — seven are hearing the Nadon reference — have been asked to determine whether Federal Court judges are excluded from the Quebec spots, according to the wording in the legislation, and also whether Parliament has the power to unilaterally rewrite that legislation.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



Justice Marc Nadon listens to opening remarks as he appears before a parliamentary committee following his nomination to the Supreme Court of Canada Oct. 2, 2013, on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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- Professional, personable, approachable with great communication skills (both verbal and written)
- Ability to thrive under pressure in a fast paced, multi-faceted and deadline driven environment with strong attention to detail (typography, copy, grammar, layout, images, colour, etc)
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Benghazi attacks were preventable: Committee

Government blamed. Report shows the U.S. government did not do enough to prevent the attacks or to protect the diplomatic facility

The U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee on Wednesday released a report on the deadly 2012 assault on the diplomatic compound in Benghazi, Libya, blaming the State Department, the intelligence community and even the late Ambassador Chris Stevens for failing to communicate and heed warnings of terrorist activity in the area.

The highly critical report says the U.S. military was not positioned to help the Americans in need, though the head of Africa Command had offered military security teams that Stevens — who was killed — had rejected weeks before the attack.

Republicans have criticized the Obama administration over the Benghazi assault, in part because then-UN ambassador Susan Rice initially blamed the violence on mob protests over an anti-Islamic film.

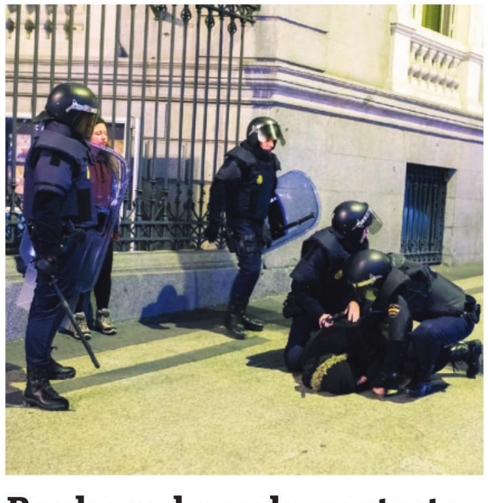
Republicans have said the Obama administration has been covering up what they consider misdeeds before, during and after the attack.

Committee chairman Dianne Feinstein says she hopes the report will put to rest conspiracy theories about the militant attacks that night. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The attack

Al-Qaida-linked militant groups later were blamed for the Benghazi attack.

- Militants overran the temporary U.S. mission on Sept. 11, 2012, and later that night, when militants fired mortars at the nearby CIA annex where the Americans had taken shelter.



Boulevard sparks protests

Riot police arrest two protesters during a demonstration in Madrid. Clashes erupted in the Spanish capital's downtown late Wednesday between police and demonstrators following a gathering to support the Gamonal neighbourhood in Burgos where residents have protested tirelessly against the boulevard that the city wants to build there. ANDRES KUDACKI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

June trial for Boston suspect's 3 friends

Three friends of Boston Marathon bombing suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev will go on trial in June on charges they hindered the investigation into the attack, a federal judge ruled Wednesday.

Attorneys for Dias Kadyrbayev and Robel Phillipos had asked that the trial not be held until January 2015. But a lawyer for a third friend, Azamat Tazhayakov, asked for an earlier trial.

U.S. District Judge Douglas Woodlock scheduled the trial for June 23.

Prosecutors allege that Kadyrbayev and Tazhayakov, both natives of Kazakhstan and friends who attended the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth with Tsarnaev, removed a laptop and backpack containing fireworks from Tsarnaev's dorm room three days after the bombing. They have pleaded not guilty to charges of obstruction of justice and conspiracy to obstruct justice.

Phillipos has pleaded not guilty to charges of lying to authorities.

Tsarnaev's friends aren't charged with helping to plan or participate in the bombings.

In a motion filed Wednesday, lawyers for Tazhayakov cited his right to a speedy trial in asking for an earlier trial date. They said that his parents have relocated from Kazakhstan to Massachusetts to support their son and that waiting until next year to hold the trial would be an "onerous hardship" for the family.

Tazhayakov's father, Amir Ismagulov, said through a translator that he is pleased the trial has been set for June so "the truth" can come out earlier. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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No love for France's 1st lady

President Francois Hollande's companion, Valerie Trierweiler, poses for a photographer in the gardens of the Elysee Palace in Paris in May.
THOMAS SAMSON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

France's president is reported to be sneaking around on a motorcycle to have a secret affair with an actress. Who takes the brunt of the heat? In a very French twist, it's increasingly looking like his jilted first lady, who has been hospitalized since she found out.

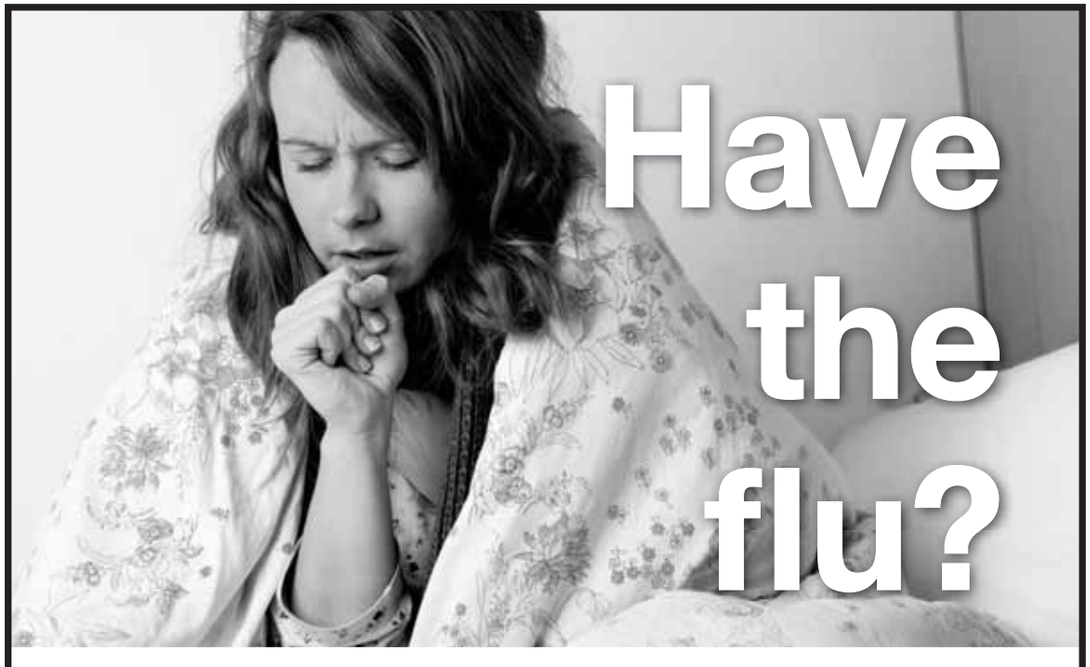
The question on many French lips this week is not, "How could Francois Hollande have done such a thing?" but rather, "Do we really need a first lady?"

That's in part a reflection of a French willingness to forgive infidelity by men in public office, regardless of the damage it causes to their women.

And it's in part because the French have never fully embraced Valerie Trierweiler, a journalist who has been living with Hollande since he split with the mother of his four children in 2007.

Seen as cold and distant, Trierweiler has followed Hollande on international visits and played the role of first lady, but unlike her predecessor Carla Bruni has failed to capture the hearts of the French public.

Trierweiler and Hollande are not married, and his reported affair is shining a new spotlight on the nearly $27,000 in taxpayer money spent each month on the first lady's staff.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



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Pope Francis waves from his Popemobile as he arrives for his weekly general audience

UN to grill history of

Public showdown. Holy See forced to defend treatment of children in front of independent experts on Thursday

The Vatican is gearing up for a bruising showdown over the global priest sex abuse scandal, forced for the first time to defend itself at length and in public against allegations it enabled the rape of thousands of children by protecting pedophile priests and its own reputation at the expense of victims.

The Holy See on Thursday will be grilled by a UN committee in Geneva on its implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Among other things, the treaty calls for signatories to take all appropriate measures to protect children from harm and to put children's interests above all else.

The Holy See ratified the convention in 1990 and submitted a first implementation report in 1994. But it didn't provide progress reports for nearly a decade, and only submitted one in 2012 after coming under criticism following the 2010 explosion of child sex abuse cases in Europe and beyond.

Victims groups and human rights organizations teamed up to press the UN committee to challenge the Holy See on its abuse record, providing written testimony from victims and evidence outlining the global scale of the problem. Their reports cite case

New study. Bird's-eye view shows high flyers aren't just winging it in flying V

The next time you see birds flying in a V, consider this: A new study says they choreograph the flapping of their wings with exquisite precision to help them fly.

That's what scientists concluded after tracking a group of large, black birds — each equipped with a tiny GPS device — that had been trained to follow an ultralight aircraft. One expert in animal flight said just gathering the data, which included every wing flap, was a remarkable accomplishment.

Scientists have long theorized that many birds like these rare northern bald ibises adopt a V formation for aerodynamic reasons.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

in St. Peter's Square, at the Vatican, Wednesday. ANDREW MEDICHINI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Vatican on sex abuse

Independent assessment

The UN committee, composed of independent experts, will issue its final observations and recommendations on Feb. 5.

studies in Mexico and Britain, grand jury investigations in the U.S., and government fact-finding inquiries from Canada to Ireland to Australia that detail how the Vatican's policies, its culture of secrecy and fear of scandal contributed to the problem.

Their submissions reference Vatican documents that show its officials knew about a notorious Mexican molester decades before taking action. They cite correspondence from a Vatican cardinal praising a French bishop's decision to protect his abusive priest, and another Vatican directive to Irish bishops to strike any mandatory reporting of abusers to police from their policies. The submissions even quote the former Vatican No. 2 as saying bishops shouldn't be expected to turn their priests in.

"For too many years, survivors were the only ones speaking out about this and bearing the brunt of a lot of criticism," said Pam Spees, an attorney at the Center for Constitutional Rights, which provided a key report to the committee. "And so this is a very important moment for many, many people who are here in Geneva and around the world who will be watching as the Holy See is called for the first time ever to actually answer questions."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Northern bald ibises (Geronticus eremita) fly in formation in this undated photo. A study released Wednesday says the birds choreograph the flapping of their wings, getting a boost from an updraft of air in the wake of the flapping wings by flying behind the first bird and off to the side. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Radio waves

NSA keeps tabs on computers all over the globe: Report

The National Security Agency has implanted software in nearly 100,000 computers around the world — but not in the U.S. — that allows the U.S. to conduct surveillance on those machines, The New York Times reported.

The Times cited NSA documents, computer experts and U.S. officials in its report about the use of secret technology using radio waves to gain access to computers that other countries have tried to protect from spying or cyberattacks. The software network could also create a digital highway for launching cyberattacks.

The NSA calls the effort an "active defence" and has used the technology to monitor units of China's army.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tax cheat hotline

Tories offer cash reward to snitches

The lines are now open to snitch on tax cheats.

The federal Conservatives launched the hotline Wednesday, saying they'll also reward informants who provide information that leads to a big bust.

Informants who provide information on major international tax evasion of more than $100,000 could get between five and 15 per cent of the money that's recovered, excluding interest and penalties, said Revenue Minister Kerry-Lynne Findlay.

"This will be a critical tool for recovering taxes that would otherwise be lost to tax cheats," she said.

Informants won't get anything if they've been convicted for being part of the tax-dodge scheme, she added.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Your country needs you ... to lose some weight

Best and brightest, but not always lightest. Police units and armies struggle to find recruits who are fighting fit

ELISABETH BRAW
Metro World News in London, U.K.

Recently Mike Harper ran into the wife of a police officer friend on a Dallas street.

"She told me she was worried about his safety because his colleagues are overweight," he recalls.

The wife had good reason to be concerned. Even though American police officers should be fitter than average, a comprehensive study reports that they're less fit than half of the population.

"They have to be able to crawl and run," notes Harper, a fitness educator in charge of police and military programs at the Cooper Institute in Dallas.

"These are not tasks that you do every day, but it's critical that you're able to do them. It's like using a firearm. You don't need it every day, but when you do need it, it's essential that you know how."

And police officers are not the only ones with a weight problem. According to Lt.-Gen. Mark Hertling, no less than 75 per cent of civilians wanting to join the U.S. Army are ineligible due to being overweight.

And "of the 25 per cent that could join, what we found was 65 per cent could not pass the (physical training) test on the first day," he said in a speech.

"Young people joining our service could not run, jump, tumble or roll. These are the kind of things you would expect soldiers to do if you're in combat."

According to the U.S. National Center for Health Statistics, between 1959 and 2008 the percentage of men who were ineligible for military service because of their weight doubled, while the percentage of ineligible women tripled.

Even though Hollywood portrays army physical training as extremely gruelling, the fitness test for new soldiers is surprisingly low.

"Fifty push-ups, 40 sit-ups and a 1.5-mile run in less than 10 minutes," notes Stew Smith, a former Navy SEAL who now runs a fitness company for soldiers and officers.

Now armed forces and law-enforcement agencies are getting serious about fitness, enlisting companies like Smith's and the Cooper Institute to train their staff. Some, like the British Army, have even developed apps to help applicants get fit. In fact, many former elite soldiers have discovered a business niche in fitness companies.

However, fitness apps won't really make a difference, observes Smith.

"The police and military do their best with what society brings them, but this is a society-wide problem. A financially struggling population will keep eating crappy, inexpensive food."

Fat chance: While experts contend that police officers should be in prime physical state, in truth they have the same weight problem as the rest of the population. GETTY IMAGES

Stew squat: Former Navy SEAL turned fitness instructor Stew Smith puts police officers through a squatting exercise. COURTESY STEW SMITH

Russia

Rotund get rejected

In recent years, Russia's much-maligned police force has been trying to revamp its image, including tackling obesity among officers.

"The fat and paunchy will not get through," former interior minister Rashid Nurgaliyev said in 2011.

The force was literally slimmed down by 20 per cent. Police are now obliged to pass physical tests, with top performers getting a bonus salary. EVGENIY MORUZ/ METRO WORLD NEWS IN MOSCOW

Canadian Forces work with what they've got

It's hard enough to attract recruits to the Canadian military or police forces without worrying about fitness.

An internal Defence Department audit released last year noted that "fitness and education levels of recruits in the last five years have been slightly lower than in the past," when compounded with other factors such as mobility, changing career expectations and an aging workforce.

Recent reports show that American police and armed forces are struggling to find new recruits who satisfy the weight restriction.

It's slowly becoming the case in Canada too. The Canadian Forces have been adapting their application process to accommodate its changing applicant pool.

In 2006, the military eliminated the Canadian Forces Applicant Physical Fitness Test as a pre-enrolment screening process, with some exceptions.

Instead of a physical test right off the bat, the evaluation is done once they've been admitted to basic training. The three per cent that fail are not disqualified — rather, they are given the option to join the 90-day Warrior Fitness Training Program.

Recruits who get in shape within the 90 days are returned to basic training.

But the changes don't necessarily mean the Canadian Forces are lowering their standards to bring in more recruits, according to Christian Leuprecht, a Royal Military College and Queen's University professor who has spent years studying military demographics and recruitment.

"I think it's important to realize — just like the way companies can't expect the people who wander through the front door to have all the skills that a company might need and that a company invests in training — the Armed Forces look at the potential that the candidates bring rather than necessarily candidates that already have all the physical attributes that the organization is looking for," he said.

PHOEBE HO/FOR METRO IN TORONTO

True calibre

> "I think the challenge is not necessarily recruiting the numbers. I think the challenge is recruiting the quality of individual that the Canadian Armed Forces is looking for."
>
> Christian Leuprecht, Royal Military College and Queen's University professor

Colorado gone to pot? High prices a buzzkill

Up in smoke. While legal marijuana dispensaries bring in the green, issues have blunted enthusiasm

KIERON MONKS
Metro World News in London

Sam Walsh, left, a budtender, and facility manager David Martinez set up marijuana products as the 3D Denver's Discrete Dispensary prepares to open for retail sales on Jan. 1 in Denver, Colo. THEO STROOMER/GETTY IMAGES

There has been a party atmosphere around Colorado's marijuana dispensaries since recreational sales became legal at the turn of the year.

"People have been queuing for four to five hours," says Ryan West, an employee at a Denver dispensary. "Everyone is so excited and proud to be in the first state to legalize, and there is so much room to grow."

West is a product of that growth, hired on Jan. 1 to cope with a boom that saw sales of more than $5 million inside the first week. Fewer than 200 dispensaries are licensed to sell the drug for recreational use and that number is set to rise, while related industries such as "weed tourism" are also growing rapidly.

But there have been unintended consequences, with prices more than doubling in some cases to more than $400 US an ounce (28 grams). This is far higher than the rates of illegal dealers, allowing them to compete, despite the claims of marijuana advocates that a legal industry would replace the black market.

Illegal dealers are also benefitting from police confusion over new laws that have seen an 80 per cent drop in prosecutions since 2012, including for distribution. "Law enforcement feels like they don't know which way to turn," Tom Raynes, executive director of the Colorado District Attorneys' Council, told the Denver Post.

Campaigners supporting legalization believe these issues are temporary glitches.

"There has been historic demand at a historic moment, but as the number of licences grow, the demand and price will settle," Taylor West, deputy director of the National Cannabis Industry Association, told Metro.

"At that point the underground market will become obsolete."

But the industry faces structural difficulties. Banks are currently forbidden from holding money generated through drug sales, forcing businesses to operate in cash, which demands more labour and risk. They are also denied tax advantages of other businesses through a gap between state and federal law.

"Banking and tax are the big areas we are working on now in Washington," said West. "We hope as other states see the example of Colorado, the growth of the industry and its advantage over the criminal market, we will see more progress."

Further states are expected to legalize recreational sales, with Oregon likely to be next. But Colorado has shown the complications as well as the potential.

Fight. EU antitrust watchdog searches for answers from Google

The European Union's antitrust watchdog is increasing pressure on Google to swiftly provide better proposals to address allegations the firm is abusing its dominant position in Internet searches.

If the U.S. tech giant fails to present better proposals to reach a settlement, the EU will start the traditional antitrust procedure, the EU's competition watchdog chief Joaquin Almunia said Wednesday. That more confrontational route could take years, but also result in fines worth billions of dollars.

Almunia said that feedback from competitors and other market players on Google's latest proposed changes to its Internet searches was clearly negative.

"So let's see if Google can improve their proposal or we go to the traditional route," he told reporters in Brussels.

"We need more, not during the next year but during the next weeks," Almunia said. Google's pending reaction will be the "last opportunity" for reaching a settlement, he added.

Google's Brussels office did not react to repeated emails and calls seeking comment.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Backlash to the backlash

Oil has been unfairly cast as a 'villain': Oil CEO

Canadians are being misled about the oilsands by critics making "sensational" and "unfounded" allegations, said oil execs Wednesday.

"Like a character in a Hollywood movie, oil has been cast as a villain," said the head of Cenovus Energy during a panel discussion. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR	91.37¢ (+0.03¢)
TSX	13,772.58 (+80.20)
OIL	$94.17 US (+$1.58)
GOLD	$1,238.30 US (-$7.10)

Natural gas: $4.33 US (-$0.02)
Dow Jones: 16,481.94 (+108.08)

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Researchers at the University of Alberta want to find out if the blood pressure devices that are located in many pharmacies produce comparable measurements to 24-hour blood pressure measurements (considered the gold standard).

If these devices are comparable, patients may be able to be managed using readings from their local pharmacy instead of having to go to their doctor's office to have their readings taken.

If you are interested in learning more about this Clinical Trial, please contact Kristi (780) 492-6156 or Rebecca (780) 492-1098 at the Alberta Diabetes Institute.

You may be reimbursed for your expenses and compensated for your time.

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
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THE EH-LIST: THE BEST OF CANADA

HE SAYS
John Mazerolle
metronews.ca

It's time to thank everyone you know, strike up the band (mid-sentence) and put one foot in front of the other, before a smiling woman in heels points out you're walking in the wrong direction.

Yes, it's awards season. I'd have described it better, but I didn't think I'd be called upon for this honour so I didn't prepare anything.

The Golden Globes have been handed out, the Oscar nominations were announced today, and The Canadian Screen Awards are back one year after they first combined the Genies and the Geminis into the coveted .

The CSAs seemed to meet our country's high standards, which is why I was excited to have full, exclusive access to this year's show, which was pre-recorded yesterday and remains distinctly Canadian despite some faint U.S. echoes:

Red carpet. Oh, my. The recurring themes this year were boots and Roots! And you've never seen such an array of plaid. I don't want to give away who everyone was wearing, but let's just say it was a very good year for French designer Jacques Cousteau.

In memoriam. A video montage of all the great entertainers we lost in 2013 is intercut with smug Canucks saying, "They were Canadian, y'know" at every opportunity.

Orchestra pit. By law, 40 per cent of the orchestra's play-off music was CanCon. Also by law, 40 per cent of that was New Orleans is Sinking.

Lifetime achievement award. The City of Toronto was honoured for its recurring, lifelong film portrayal of Chicago.

Big Winners. I'm sworn to secrecy or the Trailer Park Boys will mess me up, but here are the top contenders:

Gravity Canada: Same as the American version, except Perfect Human and Everyastronaut Chris Hadfield plays the George Clooney role, meaning nobody dies, none of the space stations are destroyed, and he puts the satellites back together while holding a video town hall with schoolchildren in Sarnia.

Canadian Hustle: One hundred and thirty eight minutes of Mike Duffy coverage, captured in the tagline, "If you thought cameras weren't allowed in the Canadian Senate, think again."

Blue is the Coldest Colour: Set during February in Edmonton, the movie's lesbian love scenes aren't much to look at because they happen under 27 layers of blankets.

Her, eh?: A lonely writer falls in love with his BlackBerry. She loses most of her self-worth and he moves on to his new girlfriend Siri after a couple of weeks.

Conrad Black: Protracted Constitutional to Freedom: This stirring story brought to you with funding from Conrad Black deals with one of Canada's greatest heros as he struggles valiantly against oppression, including being thrown in jail and even stripped of his nationality. Each ticket-holder is given a dictionary and thesaurus upon entrance.

That's my sneak peek, Canada! I have very little time left but I'd just like to thank —

(New Orleans is Sinking.)

Aw, nuts. Sorry.

ZOOM

Sending up some protection

CHUNG SUNG-JUN/GETTY IMAGES

Anti-NK balloons fly over border

North Korean defectors, including former soldiers, release prophylactic-shaped balloons due to fly to the North, carrying leaflets condemning North Korean leader Kim Jong-un.

Letters on the balloons at the rally near the demilitarized zone between the two Koreas read: "End the world's worst three-generation dictatorship." **METRO**

By the numbers

500,000
Anti-North Korea pamphlets.

1,500
USB flash drives loaded with the Korean-language version of the online encyclopedia Wikipedia.

1,000
United States one dollar bills and DVDs detailing human rights abuses in the North.

Activist's viewpoint

"There is clearly enormous hunger for outside information in North Korea. USB keys are one of the most powerful tools, because they're small, can be hidden and shared easily, and carry massive amounts of data."

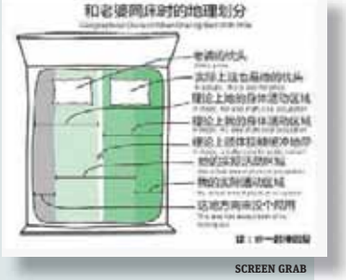
Thor Halvorssen, president of the U.S.-based Human Rights Foundation

Sending a signal: Around 50 tiny transistor radios were also included in the floating packages headed to North Korea.
CHUNG SUNG-JUN/GETTY IMAGES

Clickbait

IRENE KUAN
Metro Online

Wasting time surfing the web shouldn't be a regular activity but sometimes, you just have to. Here are some sites that I guarantee: Just one click will get you hooked.



SCREEN GRAB

ChinaSMACK: A website devoted to news about the world's most populous country is bound to be fascinating. Founded in 2008, ChinaSMACK posts stories found in Chinese media that are trending on microblogging sites like Weibo. Most of the articles have been translated from Chinese to English, so the quality of the writing isn't great, but you won't care once you start reading some of the crazy stories being talked about amongst Chinese netizens. Learn what a "human flesh search" is.

Distractify: One of the newer entries on the web, this site is similar to Buzzfeed, often posting entertaining, albeit useless articles. Wouldn't you like to learn about 'The 29 most infuriating things EVER?' Business Insider has called Distractify one of the fastest growing sites ever, with over 10 million Facebook shares since its launch in October.

Upworthy: This social media site posts viral articles that encourage debate amongst its readers. They say they will not clutter the site with "pageview-juking slideshows," but do admit the site is biased, hence "speaking the truth." It can get a little spammy with pop-up ads, since they don't make any actual money yet.

Twitter

Google is in trouble for ads based on health info searches. @metropicks asked: Do ads like this make you feel violated?

@RobbieRobb: If I search online for anything I expect it to be fair game for advertising.

@Russell_Barth: google is YET to suggest any Medical Marijuana products or sites, oddly....

Comments

RE: New facial recognition app 'creepy', says kids entertainer Raffi, published online Jan. 10
Facial recog is only getting better and will never go away. The moment we sent our single photo to the cloud, our faces became public property, worse, all your info and images on FB belong to that company, meaning that they can even sell them if they so wish
johnnyive, posted to metronews.ca

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU:
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The body is his temple, and the Temple is his choreography

Up Close. Yukichi Hattori shows how simple moves are the foundation of ballet in upcoming performance

JENNIFER LARAWAY
Jennifer Laraway
edmonton@metronews.ca

It's not enough that Yukichi Hattori trains between 50 and 60 hours a week. The ballet dancer is also one of the ripped dancers promoting Alberta Ballet's upcoming performance Up Close.

But the talented performer isn't showing his abs in vain. He jokes, "I always say that's my twin brother because I am channelling something else while I perform."

Like most professional dancers, his body is his temple. So, it was only fitting Hattori called the choreography piece he created for Up Close by the same name. Hattori's Temple magnifies how meticulous and important each movement and breath is.

In preparing for the show, Hattori says, "Daily class is like a religion for ballet dancers. We stand at the barre every morning to start the day with the most simple movement. This is essential to our work. The foundation is built and improvements are made every second. Through this disciplined routine, our body, the Temple, is built."

But for Hattori, dancing is more than a discipline: It's a way of life.

"I was born into theatre with my parents being actors and so this is all I know. I feel a sense of passion but also responsibility.

"You have to do ballet every day for a good hour and a half. Then you rehearse for the piece you are performing for five to six hours for five days a week. Some people do the gym and Pilates but I believe in training through dancing."

Hattori is looking forward to seeing how his dedication pays off.

For him, regardless of the audience's reaction to Temple, he anticipates a win-win situation.

"Everyone has a different point of view, I just want them to feel something, whether it is positive or negative. Anything is better than being neutral about it and forgetting about the piece after they see it. The audience's reaction helps us to grow."

Details

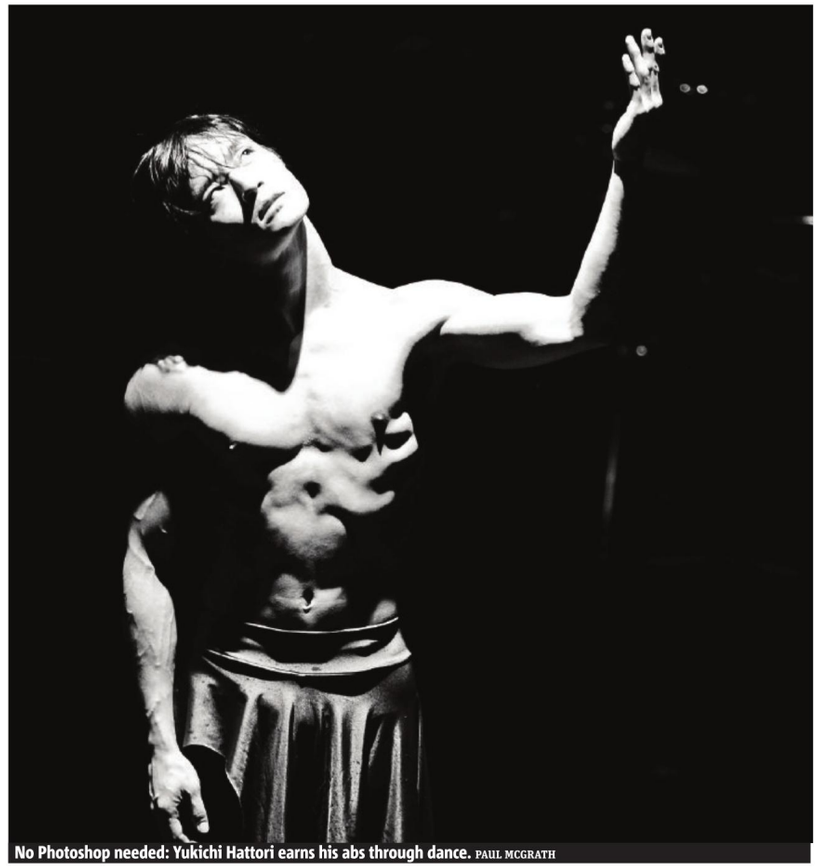
In addition to Hattori's piece, Up Close includes a second world-premiere by Alex Ballard called The Precise Nature of the Catastrophe. Both shows star the men of Alberta Ballet and promise to bring the audience nearer to the dancers.

- Up Close runs Jan. 17 and 18. Performances are at 8 p.m. at the Timms Centre.
- Tickets are $35 and available from tixonthesquare.ca. Discounts are available for students and seniors.

The secret to rock-hard abs

"Daily class is like a religion for ballet dancers. We stand at the barre every morning to start the day with the most simple movement. This is essential to our work. The foundation is built and improvements are made every second."

Yukichi Hattori, ballet dancer



No Photoshop needed: Yukichi Hattori earns his abs through dance. PAUL MCGRATH

Are the Razzies run by couch-potato critics?

Watch before you weigh in. And the award for worst movie awards group goes to: The Razzies!

MATT PRIGGE
Metro World News

Grown Ups 2. TRACY BENNETT / SONY - COLUMBIA PICTURES / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Oscars can always be counted on to miss or even snub great films, filmmakers and actors. But one can always predict the Razzies. Formed in 1980, the Golden Raspberry Awards were meant to act as the flip side of the Academy Awards, highlighting the worst the movie industry produces. But even more so than the Oscars, which traditionally reward safe prestige over genuine invention, the Razzies are boringly timid. And now that aggregating popular opinion is easier than ever, thanks to sites like Rotten Tomatoes, the Razzies do little more than repeat whatever everyone already said.

So guess what? The Worst Picture nominees include The Lone Ranger, because of course they do. The film tanked and garnered terrible reviews, therefore it's on there. Ditto After Earth, because that bombed, too. Lindsay Lohan got nominated for The Canyons, because she's Lindsay Lohan and isn't she crazy? Lady Gaga got a supporting actress nom for the roughly three minutes she spent in Machete Kills because a) she's a musician acting and b) her latest album didn't do so hot, so backlash time.

Did the Razzie committee even see these films? Did they even have to? Their nominations, as every year, are based on what has already been deemed terrible by the masses. Perhaps if they saw The Lone Ranger divorced from the bad press that mounted months before its release, and maybe even ignored its admitted over-length, they might have seen that it was actually doing something interesting, even subversive with the western genre. But that would require independent thinking.

Maybe if they watched After Earth half a year after its release, they might see that it's a nifty (if often problematic) old-school adventure. They might even realize the truly bold thing to do would be to ignore the massive backlash against director M. Night Shyamalan, especially as After Earth is the least M. Night movie of his career.

If watching films removed from their reputations is hard, then watching The Canyons should be easy. Lohan's entire performance is commentary on her well-publicized real life. Her character has made a lifetime of bad mistakes that have kept her moneyed but abused. She oozes a weariness that you can't fake.

It's the most moving performance of her career, including her earlier work before her lifestyle made her into a living joke that entertains people like the Razzie voters.

After Earth. SONY - COLUMBIA PICTURES / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In 1987, Ishtar came out in the wake of months of terrible press focusing on its ridiculously large budget and various production hiccups.

The film was set up for failure, and it got it, including Razzie nominations for Picture and Director. (Alas, a little movie called Leonard Part 6 proved to be an even worse contender that year.) But in the last few years its reputation has turned. Critics have reevaluated it, long removed from the original consensus. Its writer/director, the brilliant and beloved Elaine May, quipped, "If all of the people who hate Ishtar had seen it, I would be a rich woman today."

The Razzies are good for a couple light chuckles that will be enjoyed by people who will immediately forget them, then move onto whatever becomes the next minor distraction. Many of the people they razz deserve it, but none of them are as consistently worthless and bad at their jobs as the Razzies.

The Lone Ranger. JERRY BRUCKHEIMER, INC. / PETER MOUNTAIN / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The nominations are in!

- **Worst Picture:** After Earth, Grown Ups 2, The Lone Ranger, A Madea Christmas, Movie 43
- **Worst Actor:** Johnny Depp (The Lone Ranger), Ashton Kutcher (Jobs), Adam Sandler (Grown Ups 2), Jaden Smith (After Earth), Sylvester Stallone (Bullet To The Head, Escape Plan, Grudge Match)
- **Worst Actress:** Halle Berry (Movie 43, The Call), Selena Gomez (Getaway), Lindsay Lohan (The Canyons), Tyler Perry (A Madea Christmas), Naomi Watts (Diana, Movie 43)
- **Worst Supporting Actress:** Lady Gaga (Machete Kills), Salma Hayek (Grown Ups 2), Katherine Heigl (The Big Wedding), Kim Kardashian (Tyler Perry's Temptation), Lindsay Lohan (In-App-Propriate Comedy, Scary Movie 5)
- **Worst Supporting Actor:** Chris Brown (Battle Of The Year), Larry the Cable Guy (A Madea Christmas), Taylor Lautner (Grown Ups 2), Will Smith (After Earth), Nick Swardson (A Haunted House, Grown Ups 2)
- **Worst Director:** The 13 People Who Directed Movie 43, Dennis Dugan (Grown Ups 2), Tyler Perry (A Madea Christmas, Temptation), M. Night Shyamalan (After Earth), Gore Verbinski (The Lone Ranger)

Science guy? Seth MacFarlane explores the final frontier in new Cosmos series

Seth MacFarlane, creator of Family Guy and voice of Stewie on the animated Fox show, is bringing his love of space exploration to television.

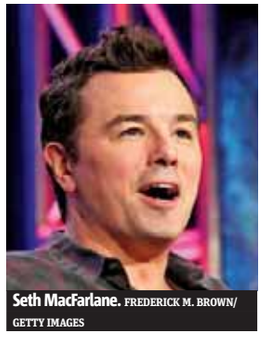
He's the executive producer of Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey, a 13-part series that will debut March 9 on Fox. It will also air on the National Geographic Channel.

Best known for his profane animated series and Oscar-hosting duties last year, MacFarlane's head has been in the stars since he first saw Carl Sagan's original Cosmos: A Personal Voyage as a youngster.

MacFarlane suggested to Cosmos host Neil deGrasse Tyson that the show should be pitched to Fox to garner a broader audience.

"I was pleasantly greeted with enthusiasm, and I didn't have to stop doing Stewie or anything," MacFarlane told the Television Critics Association on Monday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Seth MacFarlane. FREDERICK M. BROWN/ GETTY IMAGES

Liam Payne. ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Liam Payne apologizes for living on the ledge

One Direction member Liam Payne says he is sorry for being "stupid and irresponsible" after he was photographed standing on a building ledge 34 stories above the ground.

A photo published Wednesday in British tabloid the Sun shows the boy-band singer standing on the ledge of a high-rise with a city that appears to be London behind him.

The 20-year-old said in a statement that "I regret being there and having a photo taken. It was a stupid and irresponsible thing to do."

He urged fans not to imitate his "extremely dangerous" behaviour.

The band emerged from Simon Cowell's British TV series The X Factor in 2010 and became one of the world's top-selling groups, with three albums topping U.S. music charts.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lohan orders police protection for party

Lindsay Lohan likes to use protection, apparently. While in London this week, the scandal-prone starlet reportedly put in a call to the Metropolitan Police to provide an escort for a 10-foot walk from her car to a venue for a friend's birthday party, according to the Mail Online. Lohan apparently felt she needed the beefed up security detail because of a clutch of paparazzi waiting and she reportedly asked the police to arrest the photographers for loitering. METRO

Lindsay Lohan

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

Duff needed more marriage stuff from Comrie

THE WORD
Dorothy Robinson
scene@metronews.ca

It looks like Hilary Duff and her soon-to-be ex-husband, ex-NHL star Mike Comrie, tried marriage counselling for over 18 months before announcing their separation. But in the end, it wasn't enough to save their union as apparently Comrie didn't do "any of the things they'd worked on."

A source (aka: "someone from Huff's PR team") told Us Weekly, "She felt he didn't put enough effort into the relationship," they said. "He never did anything!"

One reason for the not-doing-stuff? Comrie had to retire from professional hockey in 2012 due to a constant hip injury.

A source to Life & Style echoes this sentiment. "He's in the house all day, every day," an insider tells the mag. "It was a strain on the relationship."

The couple announced two weeks ago that they "have mutually decided to an amicable separation" and will "remain best friends and will continue to be in each other's lives." The two are parents to the toddler Luca, of whom they'll have joint custody.

It certainly looks like an amicable split, with Hilary tweeting, "Mike and I are sitting here, we are so appreciative for all of your kindness & well wishes." She continued, "not an easy day but we're getting thru it together."

Gisele Bundchen

No Superbowl stress in the Bundchen-Brady house

It may be NFL playoff time in the Tom Brady-Gisele Bundchen household, but the stress doesn't carry over at home.

"He's very focused," the 33-year-old Bundchen said of Brady, quarterback for the New England Patriots, in a recent interview. "We are both very supportive of one another in what we do. ... Of course nobody likes to lose.

"Those aren't the best days. He knows he does his best. He works extremely hard."

The three-time Super Bowl champ and his New England Patriots travel to Denver to play the Broncos on Sunday for the AFC championship.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Twitter

@solangeknowles
Just called my bf to report hearing noises in the house. Go to check on my son, only to find out he's been up since 2 too. HE is the "noise".

@lenadunham
Did the thing I swore I'd never do: got a public massage at an airport kiosk. It hurts not to know yourself anymore.

@AnnaKendrick47
Aren't we supposed to have meals in pill form by now? Cause at least once a week I open my fridge and think "s---, I need to make water"

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SHOPPERS DRUG MART

Throw out the style rule book

Fashion magazines often try to rule our wardrobes with a vice-like, arbitrary and undiscriminating grip. No one should dare to brave horizontal stripes. Under no circumstances should any woman in her 40s wear a short skirt. But it's all rubbish really, isn't it? And at the end of the day, don't we have enough intellectual capacity to know when something works and something doesn't? We enlisted Julie Ragolia, the fashion director of Man Of The World magazine who's styled Lady Gaga, to help us throw out the fashion rule book.

KIT GILBERT
Metro World News

Ripped jeans are for teenage girls and Britney Spears only

Ripped jeans are a sign of a journeyed and well-lived life. A hole in the knee reflects a willingness to fall, always an admirable quality in a woman. Paired with a smart clutch and an elegant heel, a ripped jean can be quite chic.

Wearing one pattern head-to-toe is a bad idea

A woman should never leave the house looking like a tablecloth. Accessories can help prevent that: a great belt, the right bag…solid, strong pieces can tie it all together and break up a pattern before it goes bad. I'm a big fan of patterns overall. Before wearing one pattern head to toe, consider mixing mismatched patterns. It's a surefire way to boldly own a look, and is surprisingly more subtle than one would think.

Unless you are Alexa Chung, don't attempt to conquer double denim

As a devotee to Ralph Lauren and Levi's, I've been schooled to the contrary. I live for double denim. If tones and fabric weights are in balance, I say try for a triple play. I often wear chambray shirts with vintage jeans and a denim jacket. Throw an oversized Navajo knit cardigan over the shoulder to break things up now and then.

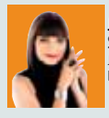
Midi skirts require six-inch heels

I'm a tomboy, and a busy fashion director, so super high heels are not at all practical on a day-to-day basis. A sleek Chelsea boot or a brogue can look just as sexy with a pencil skirt as any heel.'

Be wary of costume pieces

To a degree, yes, however one statement piece, such as an oversized necklace, or ski-goggle-inspired sunnies, are costume done right.

Twitter



JEANNE SPACE
Jeanne Beker
life@metronews.ca

TWITTER HAS BECOME A COOL AND SUCCINCT WAY OF COMMUNICATING. IT ALLOWS ME TO BE ACCESSIBLE, INSTANTLY SPEAK MY MIND AND CONNECTS ME WITH ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE. WHETHER IT'S A FASHION QUESTION OR YOU JUST WANT TO COMMENT ON LIFE'S BIGGER PICTURE, I'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU.

Exploring the wonders of the deep at the new #RipleysAquarium Speaks to the #Pisces in me! Beautiful....

With my dear, beloved friend @BryanAdams in the throes of our shoot for @YorkdaleStyle #Yorkdale50

Canadian street style

Spotted in: Toronto

Name: Alexandria

Age: 22

Occupation: Graphic design student

What she's wearing : Jacket by Wilfred, backpack and shoes by Roots, shirt by T. Babaton, blazer/jacket by Zara, necklace by Marc by Marc Jacobs and pants by Guess.

Her inspiration : "My peers, blogs and my travels."

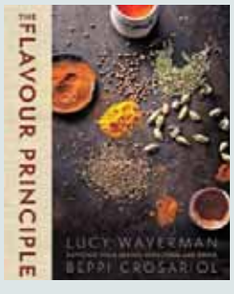
THE KIT IS A MULTI-PLATFORM BEAUTY AND FASHION BRAND WHICH INCLUDES AN INTERACTIVE MAGAZINE AND DYNAMIC APP, A WEBSITE, KIT CHAT – AN E-NEWSLETTER PROGRAM – AND A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER SECTION TOO!

SHOPPERS DRUG MART
SEE WHAT'S NEW... CHECK OUT OUR LATEST OFFER ON PAGE 25

Chestnuts and portobello: A very earthy duo

Cookbook of the Week

Shining the spotlight on taste



The Flavour Principle takes foodies back to the basis of food: flavour.

Indian curry spices, fiery Thai chilis, lemony citrus, smoky barbecue rubs — these are all flavours that make us passionate about food and drink.

In their book, Lucy Waverman and Beppi Crosariol examine about a dozen flavours through recipes and drink pairings.

The Flavour Principle features more than 30 gorgeous menus covering flavours from all over the world. **METRO**

The chestnuts add a rich earthiness to this dish and make the mushrooms that much more meat-like. Look for the largest, juiciest-looking portobellos for this dish. If your mushrooms are smaller, you may have extra stuffing; stir in half a beaten egg and bake in a gratin dish alongside your mushrooms.

1. Heat oven to 220 C (425 F). Cut off mushroom stems flush with caps and chop. You should have about 375 ml (1 1/2 cups).

2. In a large skillet, heat 30 ml (2 tbsp) of the olive oil over high heat. Working in batches, add mushroom caps to pan and fry for 1 to 2 minutes per side or until just beginning to soften. Transfer gill side up to a baking sheet. Repeat with remaining mushroom caps, adding more oil to pan as needed. Set aside.

3. Melt butter in the same skillet over medium heat. Add onions, celery and fennel seeds and sauté for 10 minutes or until slightly caramelized. Add garlic, chestnuts and chopped mushroom stems and sauté for 2 minutes or until mushrooms are juicy. Remove from heat.

4. Stir bread crumbs and parsley into stuffing mixture. Add enough apple juice to moisten stuffing well. Season well with salt and pepper. Divide stuffing into 6 portions and place on top of each of the mushroom caps on the baking sheet. Top with remaining 6 mushroom caps, gill side down, to make a kind of sandwich. Do not totally enclose the stuffing. Roast for 15 minutes or until mushrooms are tender and stuffing is crisp around the edges. Serve drizzled with Rich Red Wine Sauce. **BOTH RECIPES: THE CANADIAN PRESS/ THE FLAVOUR PRINCIPLE BY LUCY WAVERMAN AND BEPPI CROSARIOL. PHOTOGRAPHY BY RYAN SZULC. PUBLISHED BY HARPERCOLLINS PUBLISHERS LTD, 2013.**

Wine pairing

White Burgundy: Try this inventively woodsy, earthy dish with a nutty, mineral-laden white Burgundy (such as Macon or, if budget permits, Puligny-Montrachet) and bask in the subtle decadence.

Alternative: If you prefer red, uncork a Chianti.

Ingredients

- 12 large portobello mushrooms
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) olive oil, divided

Chestnut Stuffing

- 50 ml (1/4 cup) butter
- 250 ml (1 cup) chopped onions
- 250 ml (1 cup) chopped celery
- 5 ml (1 tsp) cracked fennel seeds
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) chopped garlic
- 575 ml (2 1/3 cups) vacuum-packed peeled roasted chestnuts (about 400 g/14 oz), chopped
- 1 l (4 cups) fresh bread crumbs
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 75 ml (1/3 cup) unsweetened apple juice
- Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
- Rich Red Wine Sauce (see below)

This recipe serves six.

This recipe makes about 125 ml (1/2 cup) of sauce.

Condiment. Rich Red Wine Sauce

Pomegranate juice gives a wonderful colour to this sauce as well as a subtle flavour. This is similar to a beurre blanc sauce but made with red wine.

1. In a heavy pot, combine red wine, pomegranate juice, soy sauce and sugar. Bring to a boil over high heat, reduce heat and simmer for 10 - 20 minutes or until thickened. Remove from heat and stir in butter a few pieces at a time until fully incorporated and sauce is emulsified. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.

Ingredients

- 125 ml (1/2 cup) red wine
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) pomegranate juice
- 10 ml (2 tsp) light soy sauce
- 2 ml (1/2 tsp) granulated sugar
- 50 ml (1/4 cup) cold unsalted butter, cut in pieces
- Salt and freshly ground pepper

For your phone

Video Cookbook Pâtisserie (iPhone; free/ iPad; $1.99)

MIND THE APP
Kris Abel
@RealKrisAbel
life@metronews.ca

This video instruction series offers some delicious and creative pastries. But it's the free lessons on the fundamentals of fillings, icings, sauces, compotes and custards that make it a must-have.

Smart storage for small spaces

From inside secret drawers to above the doors, there's always a forgotten space that can keep useful items out of sight

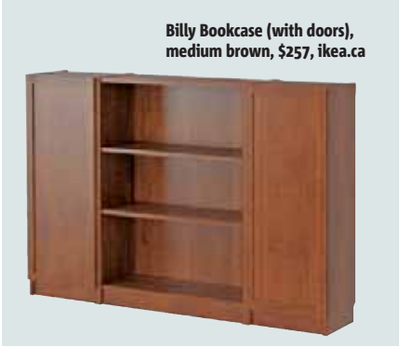
DESIGN CENTRE
Karl Lohnes
home@metronews.ca

Q: Although my condo is not small, I seem to have a lot of stuff and not enough storage. I need some ideas for keeping my stuff off the floor and hidden away.

A: For some people, "out of sight, out of mind" can be dangerous. Without seeing what you have, it could easily be forgotten.

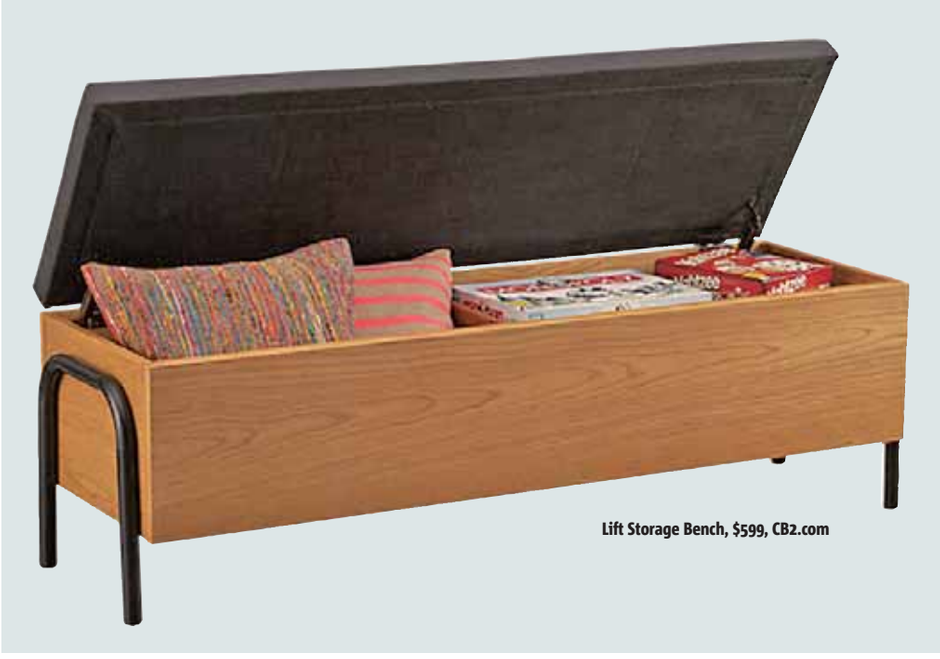
Do you have a growing collection of vintage dishes or too many shoes and accessories? Perhaps it's time to purge some of your stuff instead of storing it somewhere.

But for stuff you don't want to get rid of, there are many places in our homes that are great for storing and displaying, from inside secret drawers to above the doors, there's always a forgotten space that can keep useful items out of sight.



Billy Bookcase (with doors), medium brown, $257, ikea.ca

Bed Lifts, $13, bedbathandbeyond.ca



Lift Storage Bench, $599, CB2.com

In the sofa

Looking for a new sofa? Choose one that offers a storage drawer under the seat cushion (similar to a trundle bed) or look for a sleeper sofa that offers storage with the mattress.

Under the bed

Elevate your bed an additional five inches to hide luggage pieces or storage drawers. Rarely used luggage makes for perfect out-of-season clothing storage.

Add an extra shelf in your closet. Hanging a shelf one foot off the floor will instantly give you double the shoe storage and hanging another shelf one foot below the ceiling will offer up extra storage for out-of-season dishes or specialty baking pans.

A seat with storage

The secret to an organized room is to make the furniture look like it's there for style, not storage. A padded top allows for extra seating in the foyer, at the end of the bed or along an empty wall.

Other ideas

- Tea cup hooks discreetly installed behind curtains are a great way to hide hanging scarves, necklaces and hats out of sight in a bedroom.
- Adding a 24-inch bracket or decorative floating shelf above your door entrances will help hold small containers or books.
- Think of your china cabinet for more than just dishes. A small-scale vintage cabinet can display books behind glass doors or store shoes below. Consider using vintage china cabinets in bedrooms, bathrooms or front foyer areas (use large ceramic jars on top for all sorts of inventive storage).
- Add doors to your bookcases to get the best of both worlds — to display and hide storage. Top with a piece of frosted glass or stone and you've got a truly custom storage unit with a useable top for serving or display.

3 easy ways to dress up a dull dresser

DIY. Don't let that old dresser gather dust in the basement — turn it into a fresh, creative storage piece or stunning focal point

Before slipping back into old habits and watching resolutions fade to memories, put your good intentions to work and transform an old dresser into a fresh and creative storage piece.

With as little as a drill, screws, a saw and some wood, it's easy to bring an old waist-high dresser gathering dust in the basement into the living-room limelight.

Finish with a splash of paint and that useless piece of furniture becomes a stunning new focal point.

Goodbye drawers, hello shelves

Create a more functional living room look by opening up the dresser and replacing the drawers with shelves.

Once the drawers and hardware are removed, creating shelves is as easy as installing mounts and cutting wood to size. For large objects such as storage baskets, remove multiple drawers and install one shelf.

Play around with colour palettes, including a two-tone design with a vibrant interior colour to brighten the space.

Say aloha to a new kitchen island

Kitchen storage is usually at a premium, and a temporary kitchen island can solve a lot of problems without committing to a full renovation.

While this idea won't fly with a tall chest of drawers, counter-height dressers provide space for food prep and drawers for small kitchen gadgets. Removing the bottom drawers opens up a great hiding spot for clunky pots and pans.

For the countertop, consider either matching it to the kitchen's current design or going with wood to create a handy butcher block.

Rehab Addict

- For more ideas on restoring old parts of your home, tune in to Rehab Addict, Tuesdays at 9 p.m. ET/PT on DIY Network Canada.

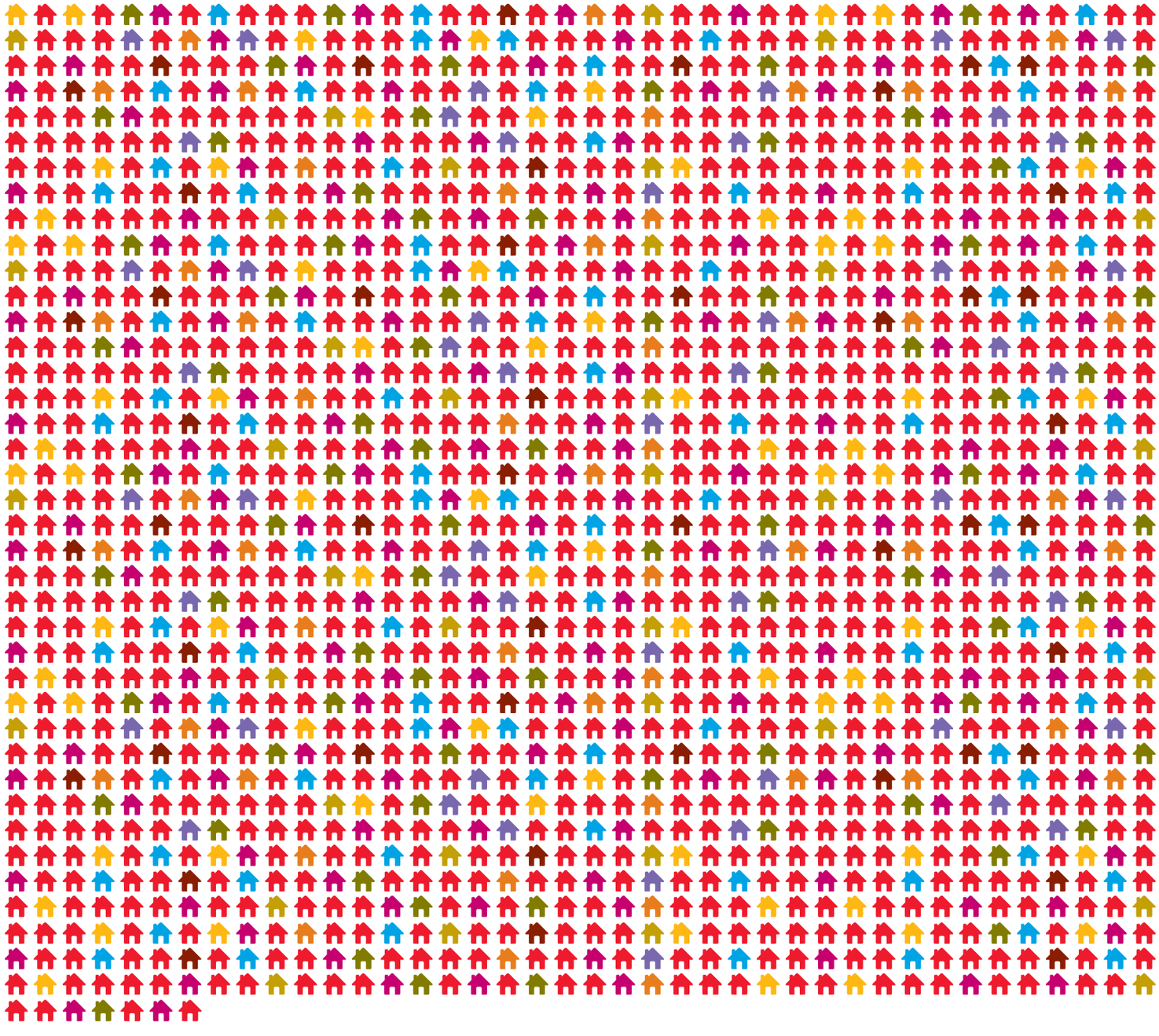
Take a load off with an entryway bench

Add some extra storage to your entryway while adding a place to sit for tying shoes. This design works best with a short and long dresser.

First, gut the upper half of the dresser by removing the drawers, their supports, hardware and the top. The sides and back can also be removed or kept in as a frame. Next, install a bench on top of the bottom drawers.

It may be necessary to install extra support beneath the bench depending on the dresser's design. Keep the bottom drawers for hiding winter gear like toques and gloves or outdoor toys such as Frisbees, baseballs and mitts.

Turn an old piece of furniture into a stunning storage piece. ISTOCK



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SPORTS 4

Oilers pass Dubey to Preds

THE HOCKEY NEWS
Ryan Kennedy
edmonton@metronews.ca

The Oilers traded Devan Dubnyk to the Predators on Wednesday. BRUCE BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES

Well, Edmonton fans, the Devan Dubnyk experiment is over.

The young, towering netminder, who was given so many chances to establish himself as a No. 1 goalie for the franchise, has been shipped off to Nashville, where he will feel at home in the Land of the Tall Goalies. Shortly thereafter, the team landed Ben Scrivens from Los Angeles for a paltry third-round draft choice. So GM Craig MacTavish clearly had a plan lined up.

I know Dubnyk had his defenders among the Edmonton fan base, but for me he just let in too many soft goals at the wrong times and for a team with a fragile makeup, that wasn't the best fit. Is Ilya Bryzgalov a long-term fit? Probably not, so Scrivens will get his opportunity. The young netminder was amazing for a stretch with the Kings while Jonathan Quick was on the shelf with a groin injury, but so was rookie Martin Jones, so there is a question about how good the goalies are versus the Kings defence in front of them. But right now, Scrivens comes in with a great chance to show what he can do while playing in front of a … shall we say, porous defence?

Scrivens played for coach Dallas Eakins in Toronto with the American Hockey League's Marlies, so there is a great familiarity and respect there. Bryzgalov will have to earn another contract and I wouldn't be surprised if it's another one-year pact, if the Oilers choose to retain him at all (not that he's been horrible, but there will be other options this summer.)

Matt Hendricks, acquired in the Dubnyk deal, is more than a serviceable player and will inject some nice grit and character into the Edmonton lineup. He's a bottom-six forward who will drop the gloves, but is also under contract until the end of 2016-17. I can understand why MacTavish would want a player such as Hendricks at his disposal, but the length of the deal also suggests why Nashville didn't mind a do-over, considering Hendricks has just four points in 44 games this season.

So the Dubnyk era is done and the Scrivens experiment begins. How long this lasts remains to be seen.

Scrivens coming home to Alberta

MacT likes look of Scrivens

It wasn't too long ago that Devan Dubnyk looked like the Edmonton Oilers' goaltender of the present and future.

The Oilers sent the 27-year-old to the Nashville Predators for forward Matt Hendricks, then acquired goalie Ben Scrivens, a Spruce Grove native, from the Los Angeles Kings for a third-round pick in June's draft.

General manager Craig MacTavish told the Oilers' website that this was a culmination of a few phone calls and should provide a fresh start for both Dubnyk and Edmonton.

"We really felt for everybody it was a time for change with Devan," MacTavish said. "It gives us an opportunity to bring in another goalie in Ben Scrivens who's had, statistically, a very good season so far, and gives us an opportunity to have a pretty good look at him going forward here from now to the end of the year."

Dubnyk went into the season as Edmonton's starter, but his struggles led to the signing of veteran free agent Ilya Bryzgalov to a one-year contract. In 32 games this season, Dubnyk is 11-17-2 with a 3.36 goals-against average and .894 save percentage.

Dubnyk's set to be an unrestricted free agent July 1, for being a consummate professional this season.

"I think when a season goes this way, I think no one really feels safe and everybody accepts that there's a possibility of something happening," Dubnyk told the team's site. "But when it does, it just catches you off-guard."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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~Premium package shown

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Canadians Alex Bilodeau, left, and Maxime Dufour-Lapointe won gold medals in freestyle World Cup moguls events on Wednesday in Wilmington, N.Y. MIKE GROLL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bilodeau continues to impress pre-Sochi

Freestyle skiing.
Vancouver 2010 champ has Canadian company atop World Cup podium in Dufour-Lapointe

Alex Bilodeau says as long as he's on his game mentally, he'll be ready for anything the Sochi Olympics throws at him.

The native of Rosemere, Que., and defending Olympic champion won the gold medal Wednesday in Wilmington, N.Y., at the second-last World Cup event before the Sochi Games.

It was a great day for Canada, as Montreal's Justine Dufour-Lapointe won the women's event. Bilodeau took the men's final with 25.72 points. Americans Patrick Deneen and Bradley Wilson finished second and third respectively.

Bilodeau has had a string of podium finishes heading into the Olympics.

His World Cup results are considerably more impressive than they were heading into the 2010 Games, though Bilodeau says a lot has changed since he won Canada's first gold medal in Vancouver.

"Every Olympics is unique. I've evolved as an athlete and as a person and I'm getting prepared differently," he said. "The only thing I want to replicate is my mental state on top of that course, knowing I've done everything I could to get ready for that day. For the rest, it's going to be a different course, different quality of snow and bigger challenges with the other athletes competing."

Dufour-Lapointe put together a score of 23.90 on her final run to take the women's title. She came back from a distant 15th in qualifying to overtake Americans Heidi Kloser and Hannah Kearney for gold.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Is bigger better?

Go to metronews.ca/gameon to find out how Canada's men's hockey team is planning to cope with the larger Olympic-sized ice surface in Sochi.

MLB

Kershaw becomes first player with $30M salary

Pitcher Clayton Kershaw agreed Wednesday to a $215-million, seven-year contract with the Los Angeles Dodgers, a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tennis

Sharapova puts Knapp to bed Down Under

Maria Sharapova survived the searing heat and an intense challenge from Karin Knapp to advance to the third round of the Australian Open with a gruelling 6-3, 4-6, 10-8 win in 3 1/2 hours. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NBA

Oden OK but Heat aren't in D.C.

The Washington Wizards had a 34-point lead against the Miami Heat reduced to single digits Wednesday night before holding on for a 114-97 win in Greg Oden's first game in more than four years. Oden played nine minutes and scored six points. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Boston	46	29	15	2	132	102	60
Tampa Bay	47	28	15	4	136	113	60
Montreal	47	26	16	5	118	111	57
Toronto	49	24	20	5	136	149	53
Detroit	46	20	16	10	118	127	50
Ottawa	47	21	18	8	134	146	50
Florida	46	18	21	7	109	141	43
Buffalo	46	13	27	6	83	129	31

METROPOLITAN DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Pittsburgh	48	34	12	2	156	115	70
Philadelphia	47	24	19	4	125	132	52
Washington	47	22	17	8	140	141	52
N.Y. Rangers	48	24	21	3	119	126	51
New Jersey	48	20	18	10	112	118	50
Columbus	46	22	20	4	129	131	48
Carolina	46	19	18	9	111	130	47
N.Y. Islanders	48	18	23	7	132	156	43

WESTERN CONFERENCE

CENTRAL DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Chicago	49	30	8	11	177	135	71
St. Louis	45	32	8	5	163	100	69
Colorado	46	29	12	5	135	117	63
Minnesota	49	25	19	5	118	122	55
Dallas	46	21	18	7	132	141	49
Nashville	48	20	21	7	113	143	47
Winnipeg	48	20	23	5	133	146	45

PACIFIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Anaheim	48	35	8	5	161	119	75
San Jose	47	29	12	6	150	117	64
Los Angeles	47	28	14	5	120	96	61
Vancouver	47	24	14	9	123	115	57
Phoenix	46	21	16	9	135	143	51
Calgary	47	16	25	6	105	148	38
Edmonton	49	15	29	5	128	174	35

Note: Two points for a win, one point for an overtime or shootout loss (OL column).

Wednesday's results
Toronto 4 Buffalo 3 (SO)
Pittsburgh 4 Washington 3
Vancouver at Anaheim

Tuesday's results
Colorado 3 Chicago 2 (OT)
Dallas 5 Edmonton 2
Florida 4 N.Y. Islanders 2
Nashville 4 Calgary 2
New Jersey 4 Montreal 1
Ottawa 3 Minnesota 0
Philadelphia 4 Buffalo 3
San Jose 2 Washington 1 (SO)
St. Louis 2 Phoenix 1
Tampa Bay 2 N.Y. Rangers 1
Toronto 4 Boston 3

Thursday's games — All Times Eastern
Nashville at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
Detroit at NY Rangers, 7 p.m.
San Jose at Florida, 7:30 p.m.
NY Islanders at Tampa Bay, 7:30 p.m.
Montreal at Ottawa, 7:30 p.m.
Edmonton at Minnesota, 8 p.m.
Los Angeles at St. Louis, 8 p.m.
Boston at Dallas, 8:30 p.m.
New Jersey at Colorado, 9 p.m.
Winnipeg at Calgary, 9 p.m.
Vancouver at Phoenix, 9 p.m.

SCORING LEADERS

	G	A	Pt
Crosby, Pgh	25	42	67
Kane, Chi	23	33	56
Tavares, NYI	21	35	56
Getzlaf, Ana	23	30	53
Thornton, SJ	5	45	50
Perry, Ana	25	24	49
Sharp, Chi	25	24	49
Kunitz, Pgh	24	25	49
Backstrom, Wash	11	37	48
Ovechkin, Wash	33	14	47
Toews, Chi	17	30	47
Okposo, NYI	19	27	46
Malkin, Pgh	12	34	46
Kessel, Tor	21	24	45
Hall, Edm	18	27	45

Not including last night's games

NFL PLAYOFFS

CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Sunday's games — All Times Eastern
AFC — New England at Denver, 3 p.m.
NFC — San Francisco at Seattle, 6:30 p.m.

SUPER BOWL XLVIII

Sunday, Feb. 2
At East Rutherford, N.J.
AFC vs. NFC champions, 6:30 p.m.

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-Indiana	30	7	.811	—
d-Miami	27	11	.711	3½
Atlanta	20	18	.526	10½
d-Toronto	19	18	.514	11
Washington	18	19	.486	12
Chicago	18	19	.486	12
Detroit	16	22	.421	14½
Brooklyn	15	22	.405	15
Charlotte	16	24	.400	15½
New York	15	23	.395	15½
Cleveland	14	24	.368	16½
Boston	14	26	.350	17½
Philadelphia	13	25	.342	17½
Orlando	10	29	.256	21
Milwaukee	7	31	.184	23½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-San Antonio	31	8	.795	—
d-Portland	28	9	.757	2
Oklahoma City	28	10	.737	2½
d-L.A. Clippers	26	13	.667	5
Houston	26	14	.650	5½
Golden State	25	14	.641	6
Dallas	23	16	.590	8
Phoenix	22	16	.579	8½
Denver	19	18	.514	11
Memphis	19	19	.500	11½
Minnesota	18	20	.474	12½
New Orleans	15	23	.395	15½
Sacramento	14	23	.378	16
L.A. Lakers	14	25	.359	17
Utah	13	27	.325	18½

Wednesday's results
Boston 88 Toronto 83
Chicago 126 Orlando 125 (3OT)
Houston 103 New Orleans 100
Memphis 82 Milwaukee 77
Philadelphia 95 Charlotte 92
Phoenix 121 L.A. Lakers 114
Sacramento 111 Minnesota 108
San Antonio 109 Utah 105
Washington 114 Miami 97
Cleveland at Portland
Denver at Golden State
Dallas at L.A. Clippers

Tuesday's results
Charlotte 108 New York 98
Cleveland 120 L.A. Lakers 118
Indiana 116 Sacramento 92
Memphis 90 Oklahoma City 87

Thursday's games — All Times Eastern
Brooklyn at Atlanta, 3 p.m.
New York at Indiana, 7 p.m.
Oklahoma City at Houston, 9:30 p.m.

Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
Be honest with friends today, even if what you have to tell them is not what they want to hear. Having said that, maybe what you think is bad news is good news in their opinion.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
Any plans you make now are under the influence of the full moon, so try not to take them too seriously. A lot depends on whether you made them rationally or emotionally.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Your ideas are as good as anyone else's but for some reason you think you are not as smart as your rivals. They may have fewer self-doubts but where intelligence is concerned you are way out in front.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
You may have a hard time controlling your emotions today but in a way that's good because, as usual, you have been keeping your feelings bottled up inside. Shout and scream if you have to.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Don't take it personally if loved ones are hard to get through to today. It seems they have a lot on their minds. If there are issues you need to discuss, wait until tomorrow when they won't be so worried by life.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Keep your ideas to yourself and stay tight-lipped even if your best friends ask what you are up to. That applies just as much on the work front. The less others know, the better for you.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Someone who envies your calm demeanor will turn up the heat today in the hope that you will start to sweat, but what they don't know is that you thrive on this sort of pressure.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Don't get upset if others don't seem interested in what you have to tell them. It's unlikely you will get much sense out of them over the next 24 hours.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Your words will carry more weight if you keep what you have to say to the point. Don't bother with explanations, just say what you mean and leave no one in any doubt that you mean what you say.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Some people may not deserve your assistance but as the moon is full in your opposite sign, you should be considerate. However, don't be so considerate that you let slip information that could help rivals get rich at your expense.

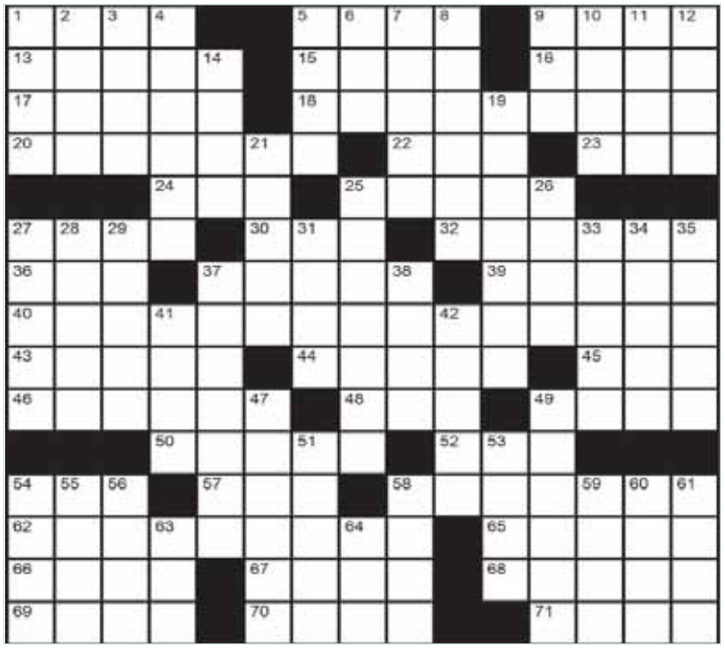
♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Today's full moon urges you to get your head out of the clouds and focus on the facts. You will have to tighten your belt financially over the next few weeks but it will only hurt if your attitude is wrong.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You may find it hard to stay focused today. You are advised to stop trying and let the cosmic winds blow you where they will. All roads lead to where you are destined to be. Why struggle? **SALLY BROMPTON**

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

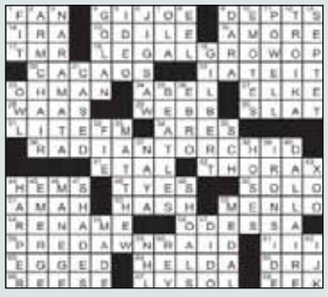
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. Canadian singer of "Can't Choose" feat. Kardinal Offishall
5. NHL officials
9. Heel height unit
13. Overseas moneys
15. Medley
16. Casanova
17. Express
18. Canadian talk show icon who early on piloted a helicopter as a traffic reporter: 2 wds.
20. "SCTV" polka duo, The __ Brothers
22. Certain constellation
23. She's opposite
24. Dietary letters
25. Actress Sharon
27. Pairs
30. Lady's love
32. F's music equivalent, _ __
36. Bob & Doug interjections
37. WWI: Canada's coming of age on the world stage
39. Pointing-an-arrow person
40. Route 99's other name in BC: 4 wds.
43. Popeye creator, E.C. __
44. White wine of Italy
45. Fuss
46. Smart __ (Wise guys)
48. Which person?
49. Martha of "Some Came Running" (1958)
50. Writer, Madame de __ (b.1766 - d.1817)
52. Actor Stephen
54. Elvis record label
57. Not their
58. Needle
62. CBC, e.g.: 2 wds.
65. People of the Arctic
66. Fever symptom
67. Novelist Ms. Ferber
68. Canadian lingerie retailer, La __
69. Autoshop repair
70. Rockefeller Center muralist
71. "Begone!"

Down
1. Ms. Simpson, to pals
2. Baseball's Babe
3. Apothecary weight
4. Diarists
5. Drove
6. Yalie
7. Last
8. Evening party
9. Pique
10. Chris of "Sex and the City"
11. Aww-inspiring :)
12. Canadian luggage brand since 1986
14. Post
19. The Northwest __
21. Heaves
25. Englishman Archibald Belaney (b.1888 - d.1938) ...during his life in the Ojibwa culture in Canada: 2 wds.
26. __-Tzu
27. W Network's current docu-series "__ & Scott" about Canada's ice dancing champs
28. Tire
29. Meryl Streep/ Julia Roberts movie, "August: __ County"
31. Annoys
33. Direct selling company
34. Novelist Charles' bookish surname (b.1814 - d.1884)
35. Comic legend Richard
37. Saskatchewan city
38. Ex-ruler of Iran
41. Tie accessories
42. Soap brand
47. Food toppers
49. Metric singer Emily
51. Show wear due to wind and rain
53. Greek goddess of discord
54. Carangid fish
55. Press
56. Sentence part
58. Tiff
59. Now, to Nero
60. Pyramids place
61. Louisiana, for one, in French
63. Drenched
64. Time off, slang-style

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

5						3	8	
	8	3			4			
		2			6	7		
3				6			1	
	7	9				8	6	
	2			3				9
		6	1			9		
			7			2	4	
	4	5						8

Yesterday's Sudoku

8	3	2	5	7	9	1	6	4
4	9	7	2	1	6	3	5	8
6	1	5	4	3	8	7	9	2
2	8	1	3	5	7	6	4	9
7	5	4	6	9	1	2	8	3
9	6	3	8	2	4	5	1	7
5	7	9	1	4	2	8	3	6
1	2	8	9	6	3	4	7	5
3	4	6	7	8	5	9	2	1

Weather

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
MAX: 3° MIN: -2°	MAX: 8° MIN: 2°	MAX: 2° MIN: -3°

BT BREAKFAST TELEVISION

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WEATHER SPECIALIST
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THE 2014 B 250. TOTAL PRICE[1] : $33,140**

Finance APR	Lease APR	Lease Payment	
0.9%*	2.9%*	$298*	3 months
60 Months	45 Months	$6,190* Down	payments waived[2]

[1]Taxes extra.

THE 2014 C 300 4MATIC™ AVANTGARDE EDITION SEDAN. TOTAL PRICE[1]: $44,890**

Finance APR	Lease APR	Lease Payment	
0.9%*	2.9%*	$358*	3 months
60 Months	39 Months	$8,400* Down	payments waived[2]

[1]Taxes extra.

THE 2014 C 250 AVANTGARDE EDITION COUPE. TOTAL PRICE[1]: $47,390**

Finance APR	Lease APR	Lease Payment	
0.9%*	2.9%*	$468*	3 months
60 Months	39 Months	$7,540* Down	payments waived[2]

[1]Taxes extra.

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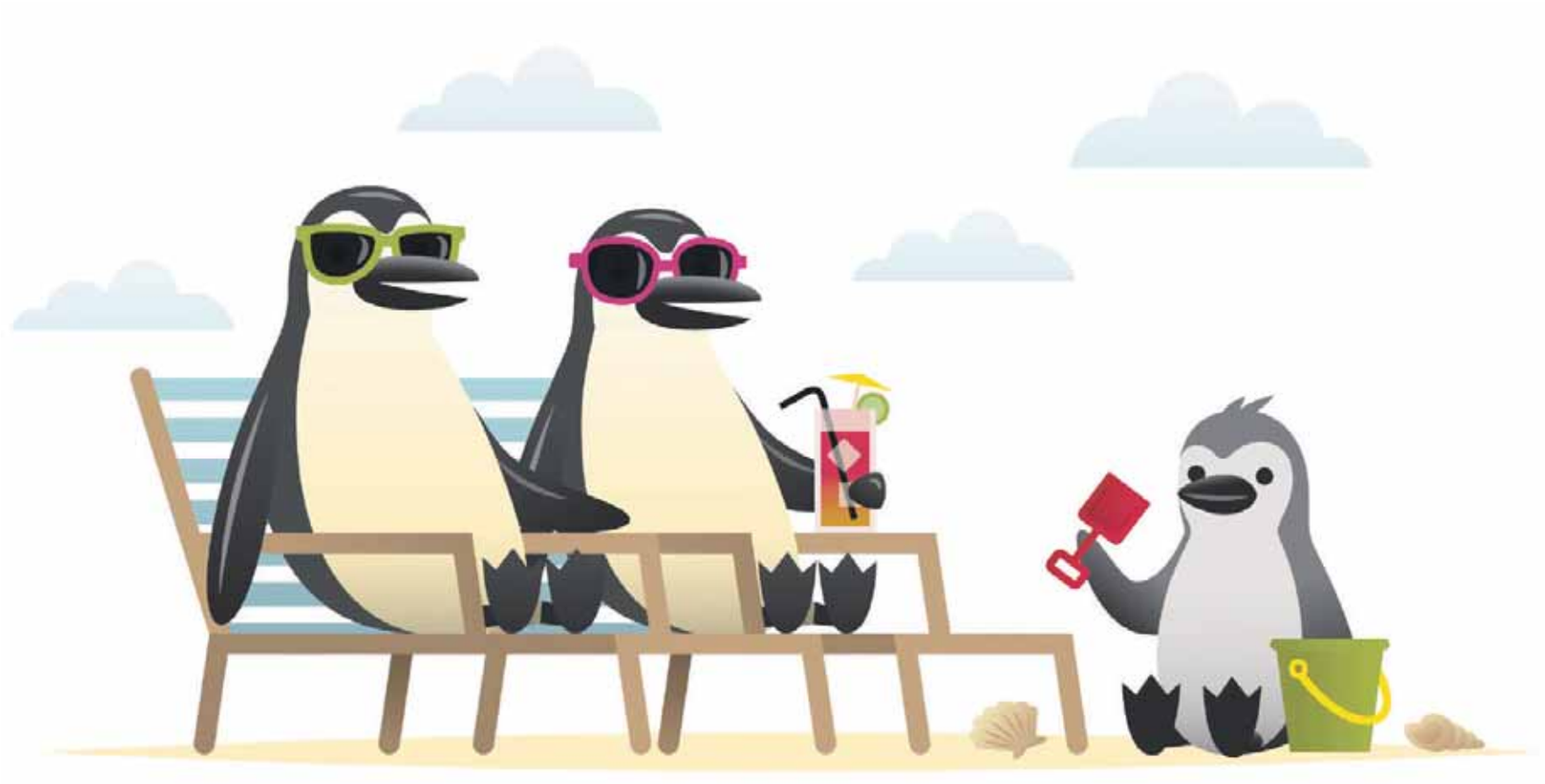
© 2014 Mercedes-Benz Canada Inc. 2014 B 250 with Sport Package/2014 C 350 4MATIC™ Avantgarde Edition Sedan/2014 C 350 Avantgarde Edition Coupe shown above, National MSRP $32,500/$52,800/$54,850. **Total price of $33,140/$44,890/$47,390 includes freight/PDI $1,995, dealer admin fee of $495, air-conditioning levy of $100, EHF tires of up to $16, PPSA up to $27.80 and AMVIC fee of $6.25. 2First, second and third month payment waivers are capped for the 2014 B 250/ 2014 C 300 4MATIC™ Avantgarde Edition Sedan/2014 C 250 Avantgarde Edition Coupe up to a total of $1,200/$1,350/$1,350 (including taxes) for lease programs and up to a total of $1,800/$1,950/$1,950 (including taxes) for finance programs. Payment waivers are only applicable on the 2014 B-Class, C-Class Coupe and C-Class Sedan models. *Lease offers based on the 2014 B 250/2014 C 300 4MATIC™ Avantgarde Edition Sedan/2014 C 250 Avantgarde Edition Coupe available only through Mercedes-Benz Financial Services on approved credit for a limited time. Lease example based on $298/$358/$468 per month for 45/39/39 months. Down payment or equivalent trade of $6,190/$8,400/$7,540 plus security deposit of $300/$400/$500 and applicable taxes due at lease inception. MSRP starting at $30,500/$42,250/$44,750. Lease APR of 2.9%/2.9%/2.9% applies. Total obligation is $19,872/$22,733/$26,273. 18,000 km/year allowance ($0.20/km for excess kilometres applies). Finance example is based on a 60-month term and a finance APR of 0.9%/0.9%/0.9% and an MSRP of $30,500/$42,250/$44,750. Monthly payment is $469/$614/$687 (excluding taxes) with $5,630/$6,865/$7,115 down payment. Cost of borrowing is $634/$830/$928 for a total obligation of $33,746/$43,692/$48,290. Vehicle license, insurance and registration are extra. Dealer may lease or finance for less. Offers may change without notice and cannot be combined with any other offers. See your authorized Mercedes-Benz dealer for details or call the Mercedes-Benz Customer Relations Centre at 1-800-387-0100. Offer ends January 31, 2014.



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